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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-130 CONTENTS *5 July 1996*

NOTICE: An * indicates material that may not be disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-NUR 26 Jun 1

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Damascus Radio Reports Palestinian Islamic Jihad Statement 2
Palestinian Affairs: Islamic Jihad Pledges 'To Avenge' Death of 'Martyr' *[Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio]* 2
Palestinian Affairs: AFP—Islamic Jihad Statement on Avenging Convict's Death 3
Palestinian Affairs: Police Arrest 4 Islamic Jihad Activists *[Jerusalem Radio]* 3
Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Orders Release of Hamas, Islamic Jihad Activists *[Jerusalem Radio]* 3
Palestinian Affairs: PNC Speaker on Jerusalem, Netanyahu's Policy, Syrian Ties *[MENA]* 3
Palestinian Affairs: Sha'th Views Future Relationship With Netanyahu Government *[London AL-HAYAH 3 Jul]* 4
Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Calls For Lifting Siege on Sammu' Village *[Jericho VOP]* 4
Palestinian Affairs: Al-Agha Discusses 'Arafat's Upcoming Visit to Jordan *[Cairo International]* 5

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

Algeria: FIS Member Denies Madani, Belhadj Ready for Dialogue *[Tehran International]* 7
Algeria: Lebanese Shiite Leader Urges Islamists To Avoid Violence *[Algiers Radio]* 7
Algeria: LA TRIBUNE Suspended Over Political Cartoon *[Paris International]* 7

Egypt

Egypt: Musa Rules Out Imminent Mubarak-al-Asad-Husayn Summit *[London AL-HAYAH 3 Jul]* 7
Egypt: Musa, Syria's al-Shar' Discuss Arab Coordination on Phone *[MENA]* 8
Egypt: Syrian Foreign Minister al-Shar' Arrives in Cairo *[MENA]* 8
Egypt: Mubarak Receives Syria's al-Shar' *[MENA]* 9
Egypt: Syria's al-Shar' Comments on Meeting With Mubarak *[MENA]* 9
Egypt: Syria's al-Shar' Leaves Cairo After 3-Hour Visit *[MENA]* 10
Egypt: Assistant Foreign Minister on Lyon Summit, Israeli Stance *[MENA]* 10
Egypt: Musa Comments Before Leaving London for Cameroon *[MENA]* 10
Egypt: Musa on Peace, Scud Missiles, Other Topics *[MENA]* 11
Egypt: Musa on Peace, U.S. Stand, Topical Issues *[London MBC TV]* 12
Egypt: Al-Baz Comments on U.S. Role, Egypt's Right To Be Strong *[MENA]* 15
Egypt: Musa Questions Israeli Meaning in No 'Conditions' for Peace *[Cairo Radio]* 16
Egypt: Papers Welcome Turkey's Erbakan Statements on Relations With Arabs *[MENA]* 16
Egypt: Writer Notes Change of Popular Sentiment on U.S. *[AL-WAFD 26 Jun]* 17

Egypt: Christopher Criticized for Supporting Netanyahu Positions *[AL-AKHBAR 26 Jun]* 17

Libya

Libya: 'Major Clash,' 'Extensive Security Presence' in Banghazi *[London AL-HAYAH 4 Jul]* 18

Mauritania

Mauritania: Opposition UFD Decides To Participate in October Elections *[Libreville Radio]* . 18

Morocco

Morocco: 'Coolness' Noted in Relations With Egypt Over Summit, Sahara *[AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI 2 Jul]* 19
Morocco: Sources React to Mandela's Decision To Recognize Polisario *[MAP]* 19

Sudan

Sudan: Foreign Minister, Saudi Counterpart Hold Talks in Riyadh *[SUNA]* 19
Sudan: Nubah SPLA Commander Denies Mountain Region Breaking Away *[London International]* 20

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Bahrain

Bahrain: Minister Hopes Iran Will Respond to Syrian Mediation Effort *[Al-Ayyam WWW]* 21

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: UK Officials—King in Good Health, Meets With Rifkind *[London THE DAILY TELEGRAPH 4 Jul]* 21
Saudi Arabia: Opposition Group—Increase in Political Violence 'Inevitable' *[London AL-ISLAH 1 Jul]* 22
Saudi Arabia: Dissident Predicts More Bombing Incidents *[London Radio]* 24
Saudi Arabia: Daily—No U.S., Foreign 'Military Base' in Country *[AL-JAZIRAH 30 Jun]* 24

IRAQ

Iraq: 'Aziz—U.S. 'Impeding' Implementation of Oil-for-Food Deal *[INA]* 26
Iraq: Mission 'Refutes' U.S. 'Allegations' on Food Distribution *[INA]* 26
Iraq: Barzani Appeals to Clinton, Others To End Turkish Attacks *[Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan]* 26
Iraq: Paper—U.S. Seeks To Impose 'Total Hegemony' via UN *[INA]* 27
Iraq: Intelligence Chief Claims Saddam Has Missiles *[London INDEPENDENT 5 Jul]* 27
Iraq: Oppositionist Reports Failed Attempt on Saddam's Life *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 5 Jul]* 28
Iraq: Public Security, Military Intelligence Chiefs Said Replaced *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 4 Jul]* 29
Iraq: Police, Security Officers Dismissed in Baghdad, Provinces *[Voice of Iraqi People]* 29
Iraq: Saddam's Half-Brothers Reportedly Under House Arrest *[THE TIMES 4 Jul]* 29
Iraq: Opposition Reports New Military Intelligence Head Appointed *[Voice of Rebellious Iraq]* 29
Iraq: Water Talks With Syria Resume 4 Jul *[INA]* 30

ISRAEL

Israel: Radio Cites Netanyahu's Remarks on Honoring Oslo Agreements *[Jericho VOP]* 31
Israel: Netanyahu News Conference on Peace Talks, Economy, Sharon *[Jerusalem Radio]* 31
Israel: Netanyahu Interviewed on Economy, Terrorism, Peace Talks *[London FINANCIAL TIMES 5 Jul]* 33

Israel: Embassy Cable Readies Netanyahu for Talks With Clinton *[YEDI'OT AHARONOT 4 Jul]* ... 34
Israel: Clinton To Receive 'Detailed Plans' on Palestinian Track *[Jerusalem TV]* ... 35
Israel: Netanyahu May Visit Morocco on Return From Washington *[MA'ARIV 5 Jul]* ... 35
Israel: Sharon 'Pleased' With Agreement on Infrastructure Ministry *[Jerusalem Radio]* ... 36
Israel: Cabinet Decision on Sharon Postponed Until 7 Jul *[Jerusalem Radio]* ... 36
Israel: State Rejects Labor Party's Election Fraud Allegations *[Jerusalem Radio]* ... 37
Israel: Court Rejects Labor Petition Against Election Results *[Tel Aviv Radio]* ... 37
Israel: IDF Lifts Curfew on West Bank Village *[Jerusalem Radio]* ... 37
Israel: Salamah Confesses Iranian Involvement in Suicide Bombings *[YEDI'OT AHARONOT 4 Jul]* 37

JORDAN

Jordan: King, UK's Rifkind Say Peace Process Should Continue *[Amman Radio]* ... 39
Jordan: UK's Rifkind Interviewed on Mideast Tour *[Amman TV]* ... 39
Jordan: Further on UK's Rifkind Remarks After Meeting King Husayn *[Amman TV]* ... 41
Jordan: 3 Palestinian Women Said Arrested on Charges of Hamas Membership *[Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio]* ... 41
Jordan: Al-Kabariti Says Bread Subsidy for Citizens To Remain *[Amman TV]* ... 41
Jordan: Popular Sectors Protest Plans To Reduce Bread Subsidies *[THE STAR 4-10 Jul]* ... 42

LEBANON

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Leaves on Short Visit to Paris *[VOL]* ... 44
Lebanon: Explosion at Israeli Post; Israeli Mock Raids in South *[Beirut Radio]* ... 44
Lebanon: Israeli Forces Kidnap 2 Fishermen; Overflights Reported *[Beirut Radio]* ... 44
Lebanon: Hizballah Claims To Abide by Agreement With Israel *[AFP]* ... 44
Lebanon: Beirut, Tehran Stress Expansion of Ties *[IRNA]* ... 44

SYRIA

Syria: Al-Shar' Declines Comment on al-Asad-Saddam Meeting *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* ... 45
Syria: Al-Shar' Returns After Conveying al-Asad Message to Mubarak *[Damascus Radio]* ... 45
Syria: Ambassador Denies Syria's Involvement in Saudi Explosion *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* ... 45
Syria: Al-Shar' 'Optimistic' About 'Rectifying' Regional Situation *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* ... 45
Syria: Al-Shar' on Mediation Between Iran, Arabs, Ties to Turkey *[London MBC TV]* ... 46
Syria: 3 New Ministers Appointed, 1 Relieved of Post *[Damascus Radio]* ... 46
Syria: Papers on Bahrain-Iran Mediation, Netanyahu's 'Big Lie' *[Damascus Radio]* ... 46
Syria: Radio Views Syrian, Arab, Israeli Peace Positions *[Damascus Radio]* ... 47
Syria: Press on 'Successful' Political Move, Netanyahu Statements *[Damascus Radio]* ... 48
Syria: Radio Urges Unified Regional Stand To Face 'Zionist Plan' *[Damascus Radio]* ... 49

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Rabbani Approves Appointment of New Cabinet Ministers *[Kabul Radio]* ... 51
Afghanistan: Acting Foreign Affairs Minister Appointed *[Message of Freedom]* ... 51
Afghanistan: Cabinet To Swear In 4 Jul; Wahdat, Mas'ud To Hold Talks *[AFP]* ... 51
Afghanistan: Khalili Ready To Hold Talks With Kabul Government *[Tehran International]* .. 52
Afghanistan: Rabbani Sends 4 Jul Message To Clinton *[Kabul Radio]* ... 52
Afghanistan: Radio Reports Britain Pledges Economic Aid *[Kabul Radio]* ... 53
Afghanistan: 3 Killed in Taleban Rocket Attacks on Kabul *[Message of Freedom]* ... 53
Afghanistan: Taleban Rockets Target Kabul, 1 Person Injured *[Kabul Radio]* ... 53

India

India: 'Sources' Predict CTBT Not To 'Sour' Ties to Moscow *[THE HINDU 4 Jul]* ... 53

India: German MP Says Western Hostages in Kashmir Still Alive *[AFP]* 54
India: 1 Killed as Pakistani Troops Shoot at Kashmir Village *[Delhi Radio]* 54
India: At Least 6 Kashmir Militants Killed in Encounter *[Delhi Radio]* 55
India: Proposals Made to Pakistan for Increasing Embassy Personnel *[Delhi Radio]* 55
India: Prime Minister Speaks on Oil Price Hike, Ayodhya Dispute *[Delhi Radio]* 55
India: Prime Minister Assures Timely Elections in Uttar Pradesh *[Delhi Radio]* 55
India: Rao Asks Partymen To Collect Complaints on Antiparty Acts *[Delhi Radio]* 55

Iran

Iran, Bahrain Reportedly Agree To End 'Negative Propaganda' *[Tehran TV]* 56
Iran: Foreign Ministry's Khorram on Bahrain, Gulf Issues *[RESALAT 29 Jun]* 56
Iran Denies Egyptian Press Reports of Bases in Sudan *[IRNA]* 57
Iran: Rafsanjani—Tehran To Sue U.S. Over Frozen Assets 'One Day' *[Tehran Radio]* 57
Iran: Further on Rafsanjani Comments on U.S. Seizure of Assets *[IRNA]* 58
Iran: Rafsanjani Sends Message of Congratulations to Yeltsin *[Tehran TV]* 58
Iran: Velayati—Country Welcomes Yeltsin's Election Victory *[Tehran TV]* 59
Iran: Turkey Urged To Investigate Border Attack *[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI 1 Jul]* 59
Iran: Velayati on G-7 Summit, Dialogue With Europe *[Tehran TV]* 60
Iran: After G-7 Summit Iran Target of New Round of Propaganda *[RESALAT 30 Jun]* 62
Iran Calls For Investment To Fight Drugs in Afghanistan *[IRAN NEWS 25 Jun]* 63
Iran: Egyptian Academic, Journalist Comment on Rapprochement *[Tehran International]* 64
Iran: U.S. Leaders Said To See Iran Behind All Plots Against Them *[SALAM 30 Jun]* 64
Iran: Commentary—Central Asian States Cannot Prosper Without Peace *[Tehran International]* 65
Iran: Daily—More 'Trouble Brewing' for Saudi Regime *[KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL 30 Jun]* 65
Iran: 'Terrorist' Group Arrested in Mazandaran *[IRNA]* 66
Iran: Rafsanjani Inaugurates Tunnel at Barzu Dam *[IRNA]* 66
Iran: President Urges Investment in Aluminum Industry *[IRNA]* 66
Iran: President Rafsanjani Views Environmental Issues *[IRNA]* 67
Iran: Rafsanjani Inaugurates Road Link in Northeast *[IRNA]* 67
Iran: President Inaugurates Petrochemical Complex in Khorasan *[Tehran TV]* 67
Iran: Admiral Cited on 'Falaq' Maneuvers, Regional Cooperation *[IRNA]* 67
Iran: Rail Link to Turkmenistan Reported *[IRAN NEWS 30 Apr]* 68

Pakistan

Pakistan: Leghari Speaks on NPT, CTBT, Kashmir *[Islamabad TV]* 68
Pakistan: Bhutto Says No 'Compromise' on Nuclear Program *[Islamabad Radio]* 69
Pakistan: Spokesman—U.S. Admits Approach on Nuclear Issue 'Mistaken' *[Islamabad Radio]* 69
Pakistan: Bhutto—Country Seeks Peace in Afghanistan *[Message of Freedom]* 70

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Minister Escapes Assassination Attempt, Officer Dead *[AFP]* 70
Sri Lanka: Spokesman Says 21 Killed in Attempt To Kill Minister *[AFP]* 70
Sri Lanka: Suicide Bomber's Attempt on Minister's Life Detailed *[DAILY NEWS]* 71
Sri Lanka: Housing Minister 'Undeterred' by Assassination Attempt *[Colombo International]* 71
Sri Lanka: Jaffna Suicide Bombing Toll Rises to 37 Dead *[Melbourne Radio]* 72
Sri Lanka: London-Based Group Denies Official's Links With LTTE *[DAILY NEWS 3 Jul]* ... 72

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: AL-NUR 26 Jun

NC0507063096

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 26 June edition of the Cairo Arabic language newspaper AL-NUR that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Arab Summit Welcomed, Islamic Unity Urged
2. Hamas, Hizballah Assailed for 'Treacherous' Killing in Israel
3. 'AQIDATI Publisher 'Promotes Vice' With Magazine Picture
4. Prominent Preacher Kishk Cited on Violence, Other Issues
5. Egyptian Cinema Said promoting Vice, Defying Islamic Values
6. Writer Defends Islamic Penal Code as Way to Eradicate Crime
7. Writer Says only Islam Ensures Religious Freedom in Jerusalem

ARAB SUMMIT WELCOMED, ISLAMIC UNITY URGED

In a 200-word comment on page 1, the newspaper's "political editor" notes the "important results" of the Arab summit in Cairo 21-23 June. He says the summit achieved "relative success" in bringing the viewpoints among Arab countries closer, and it managed to clear the air between Syria and both Jordan and the Palestinians and to calm tension between Egypt and Sudan. He points out that the summit also linked normalization with Israel to Israel's withdrawal from the Syrian Golan heights, south Lebanon, and the West Bank.

—A 500-word article by Chief Editor Hamdi Shafiq on page 12 hopes the resolutions of the Arab summit will be put into practice and urges sincere Arab brotherhood, cooperation, and unity to confront enemies. The writer praises the Egyptian, Algerian, and Saudi roles in the summit. He remarks that President Clinton's call on the summit not to harm the process of normalization with Israel shows that the mere idea of the Arabs sitting together at the same table frightens "others".

—In another 1,000-word comment on the Arab summit, Salam 'Abduh voices support for the summit and hopes it will lead to Arab and Islamic unity. He points out that such unity requires both an end to inter-Arab conflicts and domestic reconciliation between the governments and the peoples. The way to such reconciliation, the writer says, is to apply the Islamic shari'ah and bring up Muslim generations on the teachings of Islam, to keep their Islamic identity amid the ideological and intellectual struggle in the world.

HAMAS, HIZBALLAH ASSAILED FOR 'TREACHEROUS' KILLING IN ISRAEL

In a 1,000-word article on page 1, al-Hamzah Di'bis, the newspaper's board director, assails Lebanon Hizballah and the Palestinian Resistance Movement-Hamas saying their operations play into the hand of the Israelis. He begins by saying that the Israelis have always been lucky that their enemies never adopted the right methods to confront them. He says Israel's Netanyahu must be glad to have Hizballah and Hamas around, as they both helped him reach power. Suggesting that Hizballah and Hamas "are competing to annihilate the Palestinian cause," the writer says that the two organizations "completely departed from Islam" when they "treacherously" killed Israelis in civilian buses.

Di'bis notes that the "Zionist gangs," at the beginning of the Zionist movement and the "usurpation" of Palestine, resorted to bombings and terrorism. He mentions the story of Yitzhaq Lavon, who reportedly bombed a movie house in Cairo in 1948. He then says: "Late in 1995 and early 1996, came Hamas and Hizballah. Instead of looking in the Koran and the sunnah [Prophet Muhammad's tradition] for the right method to drive the Jews out of our land, the two groups left the Koran and the sunnah and began imitating Lavon" by bombing busses. "Jews were treacherously killed in busses, just as Egyptians were treacherously killed in the cinema." He maintains that the Prophet Muhammad never practiced treachery against his enemies. He says the prophet triumphed over his enemies not by imitating them, but by complying with God's orders.

'AQIDATI PUBLISHER 'PROMOTES VICE' WITH MAGAZINE PICTURE

In a 600-word article on page 12, al-Hamzah Di'bis takes Samir Rajab, the publisher of the weekly magazine HURRIYATI, to task for publishing on the cover of a recent issue of this magazine a picture of "a young blonde sitting on her knees and showing parts of her buttocks, looking at the reader with her blue eyes and revealing her full breasts, shoulders, and arms." It is strange that Samir Rajab is also the publisher of the Islamic newspaper 'AQIDATI, Di'bis says. He maintains that publishing such a "disgusting" picture promotes vice and is a sin. He notes that Samir Rajab, in his latest article in 'AQIDATI, cited Koranic verses that call for the promotion of virtue and suppression of vice.

PROMINENT PREACHER KISHK CITED ON VIOLENCE, OTHER ISSUES

Page 3 contains a 2,500-word interview conducted by Khalid al-Shirbini with renowned Islamic preacher Shaykh 'Abd-al-Hamid Kishk, known for his mass circulation religious sermons on audio cassettes. Asked why he stopped preaching in 'Ayn al-Hayah mosque, Kishk says: I was banned from preaching after my second arrest. I knocked on all doors to return to the mosque, but all doors were closed. Some political parties filed lawsuits in my favor, but the courts rejected them all under the pretext that the matter is outside their jurisdiction.

But Shaykh Kishk explains that he is still active in the area of preaching through writings, peoples' visits to his house, and telephone conversations. He criticizes the Awqaf Ministry's decision banning private preachers from delivering mosque sermons and unifying Friday sermons. He disagrees with al-Azhar Imam Shaykh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi's view that bank interest is religiously acceptable, and calls for electing the al-Azhar imam and the Mufti of the republic, rather than government appointment.

On violence and terrorism, Shaykh Kishk says Islam rejects shedding innocent blood. But he calls for a correct diagnosis of the causes of violence and urges sincere and rational dialogue and the formation of a committee of neutral ulema to discuss the phenomenon of terrorism. He says non-Muslims in the Islamic state need not fear an Islamic government, because Islam is a fair religion, and he emphatically denies that his sermons provoke sectarian sedition.

EGYPTIAN CINEMA SAID PROMOTING VICE, DEFYING RELIGIOUS VALUES

Page 4 contains a 3,500-word interview with Dr. Ja'far 'Abd-al-Salam, deputy president of al-Azhar University, by 'Abd-al-Rasul al-Zarqani. Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam discusses the Islamic values that govern media activity and production. He stresses that Islam fully guarantees freedom of expression and creativity, but says this freedom must be responsible and must not violate or distort Islamic principles or the values of society. He notes that Egypt is now seeing a wave of bad, indecent films that are punishable by law. He says Muslims were very happy with the court ruling that banned the film The Immigrant, which allegedly portrays the story of Prophet Joseph. "Regrettably, most of our films lead to corruption, vice, and sin," he says.

—A 1,000-word article by Mu'min Abazah on page 5 also notes low and corrupt Egyptian movies shown at the Cairo film festival. The writer charges that the films promote sex and promiscuity and also violate the noble precepts of Islam. He urges the culture minister to intervene "to save Egypt from this scheme that seeks to destroy ethics and demolish Islamic values."

WRITER DEFENDS ISLAMIC PENAL CODE AS WAY TO ERADICATE CRIME

In a 700-word article on page 6, Mustafa Nasr defends the Islamic penal code against accusations that it is tough, barbaric, and inhuman. He maintains that the Islamic shari'ah, unlike man-made laws, decides punishment only after removing all causes that lead to crime. He says all temporal laws on punishment failed to eradicate crime because they are incomplete legislative systems isolated from other aspects of people's life. Islam, on the other hand, is an integrated system that involves all social and economic areas. He says some countries that applied the Islamic shari'ah, like Saudi Arabia, managed to maintain security and safety in their societies.

WRITER SAYS ONLY ISLAM ENSURES RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN JERUSALEM

A 800-word article by al-Azhar preacher Zakariya Ahmad Nur maintains that Jerusalem is historically an Arab city, as stated by the Torah itself. He says only Islam can ensure respect for the Islamic, Christian, and Jewish holy places in the city, because belief in Christianity and Judaism is a basic part of the Islamic creed. He says 14 centuries of Islamic rule of the city proved this fact. The writer explains the position of Israel and the Palestinians toward Jerusalem and warns against the internationalization of the holy city as, he says, is envisioned by the United States.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Damascus Radio Reports Palestinian Islamic Jihad Statement

JN0407160396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Occupied Palestine—The Palestinian National Resistance Movement-Islamic Jihad accused Israel and its agents of assassinating one of its members whose body was found in the West Bank yesterday. In a statement, the movement said Salih Tahayinah was assassinated by Israel and its agents, and that this crime will not go unpunished.

Palestinian Affairs: Islamic Jihad Pledges 'To Avenge' Death of 'Martyr'

JN0407162596 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1330 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In a new calculated Zionist crime, hero Salih Tahaynah, 30, from Silat al-Harithiyah in Janin District, was martyred. He died of stab wounds he received during a premeditated assassination in his apartment in al-Birah, which is under the control of 'Arafat's flimsy authority. [passage omitted]

The Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine pledged to the martyr hero and to all martyrs to continue the march of sacred jihad to avenge their death. The movement stresses that it will bring double retaliation and will take revenge on the Zionist enemy. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: AFP—Islamic Jihad Statement on Avenging Convict's Death

NC0407115796 Paris AFP in English 0944 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, July 4 (AFP)—The Palestinian radical group Islamic Jihad accused Israel on Thursday [4 July] of killing one of its militants after he was found stabbed to death in a West Bank village, and vowed to avenge his murder.

The Jihad said in a statement that Salih Tahayinah was killed "by the enemy (Israeli) intelligence services and their collaborators" and warned "this crime will not go unpunished."

Palestinian police said on Wednesday they had found Tahayinah's body in the West Bank village of al-Birah and he had been stabbed to death in his bed.

He was sentenced to 30 years in prison by Israel for belonging to the Islamic Jihad and firing at Israeli soldiers, but escaped early this year during a prisoner transfer.

Jihad said he had been "hunted for months by Zionist special units and occupation forces and by the (Palestinian) autonomy services.

"Islamic Jihad urges the Palestinian Authority to establish responsibility for the assassination of the martyr Salah Tahayinah."

Palestinian Affairs: Police Arrest 4 Islamic Jihad Activists

TA0507062996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Palestinian security forces have arrested four activists from the Islamic Jihad group, suspected of involvement in the murder of a wanted Jihad terrorist earlier this week. The body of Salih Tahaynah was found on Wednesday [3 July] in the West Bank town of al-Birah. One of the four suspects is also wanted by the Israeli security services.

Palestinian security sources claim Tahaynah was killed as part of a dispute among Islamic groups. The Islamic Jihad blames Israel and the Palestinian informers for the killing and has threatened revenge. In recent months, a number of suicide bomb attacks were claimed by the Islamic Jihad group.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Orders Release of Hamas, Islamic Jihad Activists

TA0407153496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat has given instructions for the release of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad activists in jails in the autonomous areas. 'Arafat said the releases would be on condition that Palestinian security is not harmed. Some 700 activists from Palestinian opposition groups have been in prisons and jails in the self-rule areas since the wave of suicide bombings in February and March.

Palestinian Affairs: PNC Speaker on Jerusalem, Netanyahu's Policy, Syrian Ties

NC0307205396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1953 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 3 Jul (MENA)—Palestine National Council [PNC] Speaker Salim al-Za'nun said the Palestinian Authority is seeking to raise the Jerusalem issue at the International Parliamentary Union's [IPU] next meeting, due to be held in Beijing on 16 September. This is because placing the issue on the agenda of the previous meeting in Bucharest last year failed, he added.

In an interview with AL-AHRAM to be published tomorrow, Thursday [4 July], al-Za'nun said: We have Arab, African, and Islamic consensus to place Jerusalem on the IPU's next agenda, noting that this will back UN resolutions concerning Jerusalem.

He asked for Egypt's support in enabling the PNC to obtain membership in the IPU. He noted that the PNC is still an observer in that union and that obtaining a full membership is a confirmation of sovereignty over Palestinian land.

Answering a question, al-Za'nun said Binyamin Netanyahu will not be stronger than Rabin and that facts will impose themselves on him. "We hope Netanyahu will benefit from the experiences of his predecessors," he said.

He cautioned that Netanyahu's clinging to old theories will restore violence to the region for at least 25 years. After that time, he said, either the Palestinian people will perish or be forced to emigrate from their homeland, or Netanyahu will reach the same conclusion as Rabin and

Peres that no people can rule another people and then Netanyahu will turn to negotiations.

Al-Za'nun was asked about the Syrian-Palestinian reconciliation, the first steps of which were made through President Husni Mubarak's efforts during the Cairo summit. He replied: From the beginning, Egypt has been trying to cool the tensions between Syria and the Palestinians. I expect a meeting to be held between presidents Yasir 'Arafat and Hafiz al-Asad soon in order to yield Syrian- Lebanese-Palestinian coordination.

Commenting on relations with Jordan, the PNC speaker said: Our relationship with Jordan is good and relies on definitive bases. He said confederation with Jordan will take place after complete independence has been obtained.

Palestinian Affairs: Sha'th Views Future Relationship With Netanyahu Government

MM0307145996 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 3 Jul 96 p 4

[Interview with Nabil Sha'th, planning and international cooperation minister in the Palestinian Authority, by Husayn Hijazi in Gaza; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Hijazi] You have so far been speaking very carefully about the need for Netanyahu's government to comply with the concluded agreements. And it has been noted that you are cautious when you talk about anything concerning the future relationship between you and the new Israeli Government, as though you do not want to open the wounds, at least for the time being.

[Sha'th] The peace process on all the Arab tracks, including the Palestinian track, has been going through real difficulties over the past six months. True, we signed a transitional agreement with the Labor government last September, but this agreement carried the seeds of several problems, especially with regard to the issues deferred until the final status negotiations. So — at least from this angle — the Likud's assumption of power in Israel comes in the most difficult circumstances facing Palestinian-Israeli relations since the Gaza-Jericho First agreement and the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority. The negotiation session held formally in Taba on 6 May to signal the initiation of the final status negotiations between the two sides could not conceal the scale of the radical disagreements between the two parties' positions on the issues raised. It was clear that the withdrawal and border issues conflicted with the position adopted by the Labor Party on Jerusalem, settlement, and the Jordan River depression [ghawr]. And the position on a Palestinian state was blemished by much ambiguity and confusion, especially with regard to the importance they attach to the Jordanian role. The negotiations over the refugees issue were at a standstill. And the settlements that the Labor government allowed to be built in Jabal Ghunaym, which links Bethlehem with Jerusalem, so as to be extended to Kefar 'Atsyun [as transliterated], in addition to the expansion of the settlements surrounding Jerusalem, their measures in Qubbat Rahil [as transliterated], their failure to implement redeployment in Hebron...all this represented danger signs as regards the prospects for the final status negotiations before the Likud assumed power.

[Hijazi] That means that you are laying the blame for future difficulties on the Labor Party!

[Sha'th] No, and my statement should not be understood to mean that. Because we cannot forget the statement made by Yitzhaq Shamir, philosopher of the Likud's negotiation theory, about continuing negotiations for 10 years while they continued to change the reality on the ground. We want to define a framework and put the markings on the road that has led us to the current situation. What I wanted to say is that the Likud came to power under a policy led by the Labor Party, a policy that was actually close to the Likud's demands. That is all. [passage omitted]

[Hijazi] Let us move on to the present. What do you expect from the new partnership with the hard-line Likud government?

[Sha'th] First, let us say that it is not clear whether what happened in the elections reflects a social tendency in Israel that is for beating the drums of war or backtracking on the peace process. However, I believe that the new situation will add new difficulties in the future negotiations, especially with regard to Jerusalem and settlement, which were the most difficult issues during our negotiations with the Labor Party. However, on the other hand, the Likud government could ease many of the economic difficulties facing us, because of the ideological stand adopted by Binyamin Netanyahu, who rejects the separation theory. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Calls For Lifting Siege on Sammu' Village

JN0507065496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0500 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In remarks at the Legislative Council's 11th session, President Yasir 'Arafat called for lifting the siege on Sammu' village in the Hebron Governorate. The president stressed the need to mobilize many citizens and Legislative Council members who will leave for Sammu' to support its inhabitants and work with them to lift the siege that is imposed on their village.

The Council ended its session at the Education Ministry last night and called on citizens and on Legislative Council members from the Hebron Governorate to participate in the activities to be held in Sammu' on Sunday [7 July] in solidarity with its besieged inhabitants. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Agha Discusses 'Arafat's Upcoming Visit to Jordan

NC0507073596 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0510 GMT 5 Jul 96

[Telephone interview with PLO Executive Committee member Zakariya al-Agha, in Gaza, by Shihatah Abu-al-Majd in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Abu-al-Majd] We welcome you, Dr. Zakariya al-Agha, to the Voice of the Arabs.

[Al-Agha] Thank you.

[Abu-al-Majd] What are the most important topics on Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's agenda for talks with ranking Jordanian officials?

[Al-Agha] Actually, the peace process is the main topic the talks will address, in particular the circumstances of this process currently in light of political developments in Israel, and in light of the resolutions of the Arab summit held in Cairo recently. In addition, 'Arafat will follow up the stance with regard to this process and will discuss bilateral relations between Jordan and Palestine.

[Abu-al-Majd] Do you not believe that the recent Arab summit set new bases for Arab relations on one hand, and then for the peace process on the other?

[Al-Agha] I believe that the Arab summit greatly contributed toward pushing the peace process on the side of the Arab countries. It has given peace a chance, and the Israeli Government the chance to resume negotiations and continue this political process. Therefore, the ball is now in the Israeli court, and the Israeli Government should now take this opportunity to resume the peace process and the negotiations.

[Abu-al-Majd] You say that the ball is in the Israeli court. But the opinions we have heard expressed by the Israeli Government clarify that they want peace or the resumption of the negotiations without any conditions tied to them, according to the new Israeli prime minister's statements. What is the Palestinian understanding of the bases and resumption of the peace process in the coming stage so that we can realize a just and comprehensive peace, away from oneupmanship, and so that this peace can be based on realistic grounds?

[Al-Agha] When I say that the ball is in the Israeli court, I mean that the Arab world, represented at the Arab summit, clarified its stance clearly. This is that it considers peace a strategic objective. The Israeli Government must respond to this call and desire that the Arab summit expressed, and which was supported by all world countries. We want peace; we want to resume negotiations; we want the political process to continue; and we are not setting any conditions. But this process has clear and established constituents and bases set during the Madrid conference. These are giving back the occupied Arab Palestinian land in return for peace and confirming the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, particularly their rights to return and to self-determination.

[Abu-al-Majd] There are reports about secret meetings between you and Israeli officials from the new government. How true are these reports?

[Al-Agha] In fact, we have overcome the stage of secret meetings, particularly after the Oslo Agreement and the direct negotiations between the PLO and Israel. We are now going through a political process in which Israel recognizes the PLO and is negotiating with it. Recently, there have been public, not secret, contacts with some officials. There was a meeting between brother Yasir 'Arafat and the Israeli prime minister's adviser. All of these are more or less preparatory steps that have not reached the stage where we can consider negotiations as having been resumed seriously and officially.

[Abu-al-Majd] For your part, as Palestinians, what is the Palestinian plan to confront these new developments on the Palestinian-Israeli track? Have there been any contacts on the bilateral level with Israel, or Arab countries, or perhaps with the United States?

[Al-Agha] Contacts are continuing in all directions, whether with the Israelis to discover the Israeli stances, or with Israeli peace forces. Contacts with all the Arab countries continue, particularly with the Arab Republic of Egypt, which is currently considered the leader of joint Arab action. Also, there are international contacts, particularly with the cosponsors of the peace process, the United States and Russia, and with the European Union and the rest of world countries to urge them to put pressure on the Israeli Government to begin the negotiations' process once again.

[Abu-al-Majd] Dr. Zakariya al-Agha, member of the PLO Executive Committee; recently, after the Arab summit in Cairo, President Mubarak visited France and discussed with French President Jacques Chirac the peace process and the European role in this process. At the same time, Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa visited the British capital, London, where he confirmed that there is no place for a superpower in the Middle East. How does the Palestinian leadership view this Egyptian action on the peace process?

[Al-Agha] The Egyptian stance is a true Arab stance. It is Egypt's permanent stance to support the Arab cause and everything relating to Arab interests. Egypt has always cared about Arab rights. With regard to the question of Palestine, Egypt's role has always been a vanguard and immortal role, and will continue to be like this. It is a leading and central role. We highly appreciate this honorable stance taken by the president, government, and people of the Arab Republic of Egypt to support the Palestinian people politically and at all other levels. We believe that this strengthens the Palestinian stance, and could strengthen the Arab stance, and bolster it to become influential in the international arena.

[Abu-al-Majd] We thank you, our listeners, and thank Dr. Zakariya al-Agha, member of the PLO Executive Committee, who was with us on the phone line between Cairo and Gaza.

[Al-Agha] Thank you.

Algeria

Algeria: FIS Member Denies Madani, Belhadj Ready for Dialogue

NC0307192396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement to our radio, Anwar Haddam, chairman of the parliamentary committee of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] in exile, denied that the front's two jailed leaders have shown readiness to hold a dialogue with the government.

Haddam asserted the front's previous stand that freeing shaykhs Abbassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, and other prisoners in the Algerian regime's jails, is a condition to initiate any dialogue with the government.

Meanwhile, Rabah Kebir, chairman of the FIS's executive committee in exile, dismissed this report, which AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT attributed to officials of the front. He said Madani and Belhadj have been missing since June 1995 and no one knows their whereabouts. He added: We demand that the Algerian regime free them to enable them to help halt the bloodbaths.

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT had claimed that shaykhs Madani and Belhadj expressed their readiness to call a stop to the acts of violence and resume talks with the government. The newspaper attributed the report to officials in the front, whom it did not name.

Algeria: Lebanese Shiite Leader Urges Islamists To Avoid Violence

LD0307153496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Shaykh Mahdi Shams al-Din, chairman of the Higher Islamic Shiite Council in Lebanon, has urged the Islamic movements in Algeria to face up to reality and end violence, saying that the use of violence is never permissible.

In a statement published in the latest issue of the London-based monthly magazine, AL-DIBLUMASI, the shaykh said that the behavior of Islamists that put Islam in a confrontation with society could not benefit Islam in any way, which was the case in Algeria and Egypt.

Shaykh Shams al-Din advised Islamists to avoid compulsive action and to study religion before calling for it. He said that the pronouncement of atonement and deliverance of fatwa without proper understanding of jurisprudence were serious matters.

Shaykh Shams al-Din said that he was convinced that flexibility, avoidance of rash action, openness to others, and attempts to understand other people's views could only benefit society.

Algeria: LA TRIBUNE Suspended Over Political Cartoon

LD0407142796 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Algerians will not find the newspaper LA TRIBUNE on their newsstands today. The doors of this private daily's premises were sealed yesterday and the paper will not be published until further notice. The chief editor and the publication director of the daily were placed under judicial control.

The reason for the suspension is a cartoon which was published in the paper representing Algerian flags hoisted along a street, with the following comment: Is it for 5 July, national independence anniversary, asks a passer-by? Another passerby answers: No, they are hanging out the dirty linen; it is a shortcut to washing dirty linen in private. The cartoon concerns the 15 July meeting between the regime and the political parties.

Egypt

Egypt: Musa Rules Out Imminent Mubarak-al-Asad-Husayn Summit

MM0307113196 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 3 Jul 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Randah Taqiyy-al-Din: "Musa Rules Out Imminent Mubarak, al-Asad, King Husayn Summit"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Paris — [passage omitted] [Egyptian President] Mubarak was accompanied to Paris by Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, who told AL-HAYAH that "the European role in the situation in the Middle East was reflected in the statement issued by the Florence summit and in the consultations between Chirac and Mubarak before and after that summit. It [the statement] confirmed Europe's desire to play an important role in the peace process framework in order to push it forward." Musa ruled out an imminent summit bringing together Mubarak, President Hafiz al-Asad, and King Husayn.

He added that, as is known, "there is currently some concern over the peace process. It became clear after the Arab summit held recently in Cairo that there is considerable correspondence between the Arab and European stands, hence the need to continue consultations."

Musa went on to say that the meeting between Chirac and Mubarak comes after three summits: the G-7 summit in Lyon, the European summit in Florence, and the Arab summit in Cairo, all of which dealt with the situation in the Middle East. Meetings will also be held between Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and the Egyptian president and between the latter and President Bill Clinton. "This is why President Mubarak said it is important to hold meetings with European leaders, first with President Chirac and then with other European leaders."

On U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's recent visits to Egypt and Israel and the reports that they achieved no results as regards the peace process, Musa said: "We cannot say that there is failure with regard to the peace process. On the contrary, there is a big possibility of it being pushed forward despite the current concern. This possibility depends on the outcome of the upcoming meetings."

He stressed that the Cairo summit produced "numerous positive results at the level of Arab ranks, including the bilateral meetings held on the periphery of the summit: the meeting between Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and King Husayn of Jordan, the meeting between al-Asad and Palestinian National Authority President Yasir 'Arafat, and the Egyptian-Sudanese meeting."

Musa ruled out the possibility of a tripartite summit being held soon among Mubarak, al-Asad, and King Husayn. He said that no date has been set for it, nor have preparations for it started. However, he expects Netanyahu to visit Cairo after his visit to the United States.

He stressed that Egyptian-U.S. relations are "important and principal [muhimmah, ra'isiyah], and we are keen to continue and advance them. President Mubarak's upcoming visit to the United States is evidence of this, as is Christopher's recent visit to Egypt. These contacts at various levels confirm what does not need to be confirmed."

However, he pointed out that the nature of these relations "does not mean that [views] are completely identical on the various issues. But when differences emerge in certain situations, we discuss them frankly. On the whole, relations are cordial and characterized by frankness and clarity."

On the extent of the willingness of Clinton's administration, which is busy with the presidential election campaign, to exert pressure on Israel, Musa said that he had read the Lyon summit's statement, "which reflected a less powerful position compared with the statement issued by the European summit. However, it stressed the land-for-peace principle and received Clinton's approval, which means that the United States can do a great deal, even during the election campaign." [passage omitted]

Egypt: Musa, Syria's al-Shar' Discuss Arab Coordination on Phone

NC0307162396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1530 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] London, 3 Jul (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa received a telephone call today from his Syrian counterpart Faruq al-Shar', who briefed him on his recent visit to Bahrain and Iran.

The two ministers discussed Arab coordination mechanisms, in light of the resolutions of the expanded Arab summit held in Cairo last month. They also exchanged views on the topics on the agenda of the next meeting of the Damascus Declaration foreign ministers, to be held in Muscat 13-15 July.

The Syrian foreign minister told Musa that he will visit Cairo tomorrow for talks with senior officials to coordinate the Syrian and Egyptian positions.

Egypt: Syrian Foreign Minister al-Shar' Arrives in Cairo

NC0407084296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0810 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 Jul (MENA)—Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' arrived in Cairo this morning on a quick visit that will last a few hours.

Upon his arrival al-Shar' said he is carrying a message from Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad for his brother President Husni Mubarak. He added that the message falls within the constant consultations between the two countries, especially after the recent Arab summit in Cairo.

Al-Shar' said that during his visit to Cairo he will review the situation in the area with Egyptian officials, especially Syria's efforts to contain the differences between Bahrain and Iran. He will also discuss Syrian-Egyptian efforts to correct the Arab situation.

Asked if there is Syrian mediation between Egypt and Iran, al-Shar' said there is no mediation in the literal meaning of the word. But during his presence in Tehran he said he felt that the Iranian leadership wanted to improve relations with Egypt. They also greatly appreciate Egypt's Arab and Islamic role, he said.

The Syrian foreign minister was met at the airport by Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs.

Egypt: Mubarak Receives Syria's al-Shar'

NC0407090796 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0855 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 Jul (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak this morning received Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al- Shar'. The meeting was attended by Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs.

Egypt: Syria's al-Shar' Comments on Meeting With Mubarak

NC0407114296 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1105 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 Jul (MENA)—Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' has stated that he conveyed a message to President Husni Mubarak from Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. The message deals with developments in the region and following up on the Arab summit in Cairo.

After meeting President Mubarak today, al-Shar' said the message deals with all that we can do jointly and unilaterally to clear the air in the region and marshal the Arab rank—the basic aims of the summit.

Asked if the Syrian president's message to Mubarak mentions Syrian mediation between Egypt and Iran, al-Shar' said: "I briefed President Mubarak on the successful Syrian mediation efforts between Iran and Bahrain. I also briefed him on my recent talks in Tehran, which dealt with Arab-Iranian relations in general. During these talks we concluded that there is common interest in improving the climate of Arab-Iranian relations and in removing any differences or misunderstanding, especially between Egypt and Iran." Al-Shar' added: "I found the Iranians showed great interest in this subject. They appreciate Egypt's important role in the Arab and Islamic arenas toward achieving security and stability in this sensitive region and facing the challenges."

Asked about the possibility of an alliance emerging in the region to confront the Israeli-Turkish military agreement, al-Shar' said: "We are against pacts. That is why we are against the Turkish-Israeli agreement." He added: "We hope the new Turkish Government, which, as it seems, will show understanding of Arab issues and a desire to establish new relations with Syria in particular, will reconsider the Turkish-Israeli agreement out of a desire not to create pacts. Even during the fifties, pacts were the subject of popular resentment; they caused Turkey's isolation in particular because it was a member of these pacts."

The Syrian foreign minister said that Turkey is wrong to engage in or form new alliances. We believe it is in Turkey's interest to have good relations with the Arab states as much as it is in our interest as Syrians and Arabs in general to have good relations with neighboring Turkey, al-Shar' said.

Asked if Syria is undertaking mediation between Egypt and Iran, al-Shar' said: It is in the pan-Arab interest to have good relations with neighboring states, Turkey or Iran, based on good neighborliness and cooperation for the common interest to serve the cause of a just and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy and the land-for-peace principle.

Asked whether Syria will take part in the economic summit in Cairo in November, he replied that the issue has not been raised for discussion.

Asked about reported Syrian-Iraqi meetings and a meeting held between Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and Iraqi President Saddam Husayn some time ago, al-Shar' replied: We in Syria have reiterated that we are careful and eager to preserve the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. We reject any attempt to partition Iraq. We also support the easing of the Iraqi people's suffering. Any contribution on our part as Syrians and Arabs must be in this context.

Asked about an Egyptian-Syrian-Jordanian-Palestinian summit in Damascus soon, al-Shar' said: This issue is not being discussed right now and was not discussed before. But I heard about it from the media.

On whether there will be a Jordanian-Syrian summit meeting soon, al-Shar' said: I believe King Husayn wants to come to Syria to hold this summit. But no date has been fixed for it.

The Syrian foreign minister was asked whether Syria welcomes dialogue with Turkey anytime soon. He replied: We welcome dialogue with Turkey.

Commenting on recent remarks by Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, al-Shar' said: Let me comment on that. Netanyahu said they did not endorse the land-for-peace principle when they went to Madrid in 1991. I would like to say that Netanyahu, who was Israel's permanent delegate to the United Nations at the time, should know better than others that UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 were the basis of Madrid summit and that they involved an extremely important principle equal to, if not stronger than, the land-for-peace principle. I am referring to a stipulation in the two resolutions that it is impermissible to seize land by war or force. The land-for-peace formula drew on that stipulation and no one should forget it.

Egypt: Syria's al-Shar' Leaves Cairo After 3-Hour Visit

NC0407104796 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1020 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 Jul (MENA)—Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' left Cairo this afternoon after a quick three-hour visit during which he was received by President Husni Mubarak. He was seen off by Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs.

Egypt: Assistant Foreign Minister on Lyon Summit, Israeli Stance

NC0307165696 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1600 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 3 Jul (MENA)—Ambassador Fathi al-Shadhili, assistant foreign minister for European affairs, has said that the European-Arab consensus on the Middle East and the peace process provides added evidence that the Arab position is harmonious with the needs and ambitions of international legitimacy at large.

He added that this also shows how far the positions and remarks coming from Israel depart from the international consensus and the framework adopted by international legitimacy as an approach to a peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

Ambassador al-Shadhili added that Europe has certain interests that govern the views of this or that side, since Europe is interested in protecting its interests with Arabs and in the Arab world.

The assistant foreign minister pointed out that the Arab position was further consolidated by the Lyon G-7 summit. He remarked that the stance assumed by the seven states and Russia on the peace process has a special significance, particularly with the U.S. participation as an active party with Russia in sponsoring the peace process. He noted that Lyon resolutions were issued with U.S. participation and approved by the U.S. President. This wider framework enabled the President to observe logic and justice and side with the known international drive toward the Middle East and support for the Arab approach.

Asked about Israel's and Netanyahu's government's departure from the international consensus, Ambassador al-Shadhili said: I question the seriousness of those who formulate the Israeli positions. Whoever formulated these positions knows in advance that they cannot be taken as a basis for negotiations by the other parties concerned.

Ambassador al-Shadhili reiterated that the new Israeli approach on the peace process and its established principles violate the agreed texts. It should be prohibited and incriminated, he remarked.

He added that the Israeli leaders are "probably" influenced by electoral considerations and that they have not developed a serious preparedness to negotiate with the other parties to the peace process.

He added that the security the new Israeli government is talking about must take the collective interests of all the concerned parties into consideration.

He pointed out that one party's attempt to create regional situations that agree with its own security needs and conflict with the needs of others means risking long-term stability for short-term national stability, since the other parties will try to pursue the same approach.

Egypt: Musa Comments Before Leaving London for Cameroon

NC0407133796 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1200 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] London, 4 Jul (MENA)—Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa left London for Cameroon today to attend the OAU foreign ministers meeting preparing for the African summit slated for Yaounde on Monday [8 July].

During his two-day visit to London, Musa took part in a conference organized by Harvard University entitled: "Making Peace Pay: Balancing Security and Prosperity."

In statements before leaving the British capital, Musa stressed that "Israel cannot force a fait accompli on the Arabs." He warned also that "the Israelis are mistaken to think that they can force anything on the Arabs, relying on their power or through negotiations."

Musa pointed out: "What we should achieve is a solution acceptable to all the parties, a peace that balances all the aspects of the peace process."

Asked whether Egyptian-Sudanese relations have improved, the foreign minister said that President Husni Mubarak met President al-Bashir on the sidelines of the summit in Cairo. He pointed out that the issue of Sudan will not be on the agenda in Yaounde.

Touching on Egyptian-U.S. relations, 'Amr Musa said that contacts continue between the two sides. He added that President Mubarak has denied there is a crisis between the two countries. He noted also that the president will visit the United States in late July.

Replying to a question, Musa said that the Damascus Declaration states, six Gulf states in addition to Egypt and Syria, will meet soon in Muscat in line with their consultations and coordination.

Touching on Iraq, the foreign minister called on Baghdad to comply with all the resolutions the UN Security Council issued after the cease-fire and the war to liberate Kuwait. Our position on Iraq is that of an Arab who is very concerned over the Iraqi people's conditions and Iraq's land and borders and who wants things to culminate in the implementation of all the Security Council resolutions, Musa said.

Egypt: Musa on Peace, Scud Missiles, Other Topics

NC0407080096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0540 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 Jul (MENA)—Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has asserted that Israel's belief that it can have both land and peace is wrong, absurd, and impractical. In an interview published in the newspaper AL-AHRAM today, he said there can be no peace while there is occupation of land. He said Israel's talk that it can have both land and peace is ludicrous and is something that we will not deal with or accept. He added that any country working for peace must negotiate on the basis of the land-for-peace principle approved by the United Nations. He indicated that these are not prior conditions, but logical bases for peace approved by the international community.

Referring to the Israeli-U.S. uproar over Egypt's acquisition of Scud missiles from North Korea, Musa indicated that the issue of the Scud missiles must come within discussion of a bigger file. If someone wants to raise the subject of missiles, he must do so in its every aspect, including Israeli missiles and antimissile missiles. Without an endorsement of this principle, there can be no talk of this subject. Musa said the Scud missiles issue was not on the agenda of the talks between President Husni Mubarak and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. This subject was mentioned in the passing, in the sense that Christopher did not come to Egypt to discuss it. Hence this subject was not discussed and there were no questions and answers on it.

On Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi's call for an Egyptian-Israeli-Palestinian summit, Musa said this idea can be useful and acceptable if the parties agree on the framework that must govern it. Negotiations with the Palestinians require Israel to implement what was agreed upon previously with the Palestinians. More than anything else there must be determination to continue the peace process in accordance with previous agreements. The Palestinian issue cannot be considered resolved unless the Palestinians exercise their right to self-determination. He added that a tripartite summit is possible, even though we have not discussed it with any party yet. He said it must be agreed from the beginning that Netanyahu's no's lead nowhere. If we want to move, we must discuss all the issues, including Jerusalem.

Musa said comprehensive peace means normal relations among the states of the region. But the quest for peace must be balanced. Any obstruction will have a negative effect, not only on the governmental, but also on the popular level. Accordingly, the nature of relations must be directly proportional to the progress in the peace process. Any obstruction or negative attitude creates further obstruction and a negative attitude on the other side.

Asked about the security agreement between Israel and the United States, Musa said Egypt's stance on this subject is very clear. Israel's armament has reached an unacceptable degree, one that can destabilize the region and lead to an arms race, including a nuclear arms race. We cannot blame anyone in the region for acquiring nuclear know-how to protect himself as long as Israel's nuclear program exists. He said an arms race will start in the region if Israel keeps its nuclear program.

Asked if there are U.S. and Israeli intentions to contain Egypt's role in the region, Musa said: "I do not believe there is a containment. Containment occurs when a country stands idly by and does not move. Containment occurs when a country is weak and nonessential. Egypt does not stand idly by. It is also a big country with great political clout. Its role is strong and central in this region and beyond." He said that any attempt at containment will fail, because Egypt intends to continue its role in pushing forward the balanced Arab-Israeli peace process. Egypt will not serve any other objective. Egypt will not serve an Israeli peace but will oppose it. It will also oppose any situation that precludes the establishment of a balanced peace. He said that any attempt to contain Egypt's role will not succeed, because Egypt will not remain silent about these attempts.

Musa said that any attempt to act against Syria or to pile on pressure regarding the peace process is wrong. He noted that Syria is a main partner in the peace process. It must be dealt with on the basis of persuading all the parties to go to the negotiating table.

Asked about the Israeli-Turkish agreement, Musa said: "We do not know the details of this agreement. The Arab side has Turkish assurances on the highest level. But the contents of the agreement have not been revealed to anyone and remain unknown. This is the reason for the continuing questions on this."

On Israel's influence in Africa, Musa said that if we speak about Israel's movement toward peace, there is no conflict of interests in Africa, there is no rivalry, and this is a healthy phenomenon. But if we see that Israel is not serious about peace, the price that Israeli trade and diplomacy will pay will be high because the African peoples and countries are committed to a just and balanced peace. He said that if a balanced peace is not established, Israel will not benefit from the breakthroughs it has achieved in Africa.

Musa stressed that contacts among the Arab countries have continued since the Arab summit in Cairo. He noted reports of a possible Egyptian-Syrian-Jordanian summit and said this is not on the agenda. But such a summit is not ruled out if necessity dictates.

Musa noted that Turkey and Iran reacted positively to the Arab summit communique. He said it is not in the interest of the Arabs to antagonize these two states. And it is not in the interest of these two states to antagonize the Arabs. On the contrary, positive relations between these two countries and the Arab world are a must. He added that Iran must reconsider some aspects of its foreign policy toward the Arab countries. The Arabs will continue to want to know the truth about the defense agreement between Turkey and Israel.

Asked about the possibility of an Egyptian-European move regarding the peace process in the region in lieu of the U.S. role, Musa said there is no such thing as an alternative move. There is a parallel or an additional and supportive move. The European role is required and important. Therefore, we will not replace a role with a role. All the roles move in one direction. They work to promote the land-for-peace principle, resume the talks, and conclude the outstanding topics on the negotiating table.

Musa said Europe must enhance its role in the Middle East. The ground for this European role is now prepared after the Florence EU summit statement and the Lyons G-7 summit statement. He added that the Florence and Lyons statements are positive and advanced. There is also European activity in the Mediterranean region seeking a just peace in the region. All this makes Europe's role more than a "financier" of the peace process. This role participates in building peace and protecting it from negative developments, such as the disavowal of the land-for-peace principle.

Egypt: Musa on Peace, U.S. Stand, Topical Issues

NC0407185096 London MBC Television in Arabic 1530 GMT 4 Jul 96

[Interview with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa by Nasr Farghali; place and date not given; from the "Talk of the Hour" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Farghali] Welcome, Mr. Foreign Minister, to MBC's "Talk of the Hour" program.

[Musa] Thank you. I am pleased to be with you on MBC.

[Farghali] The pleasure is ours.

[Musa] Thank you for hosting me on this program.

[Farghali] Thank you, Sir. The rhythm of Egypt's diplomatic movement is fast. Egyptian diplomacy is moving along numerous channels. These moves are definitely part of an integrated strategy that projects Egypt's vision of the region and the world in the years to come. What are the features of this strategy?

[Musa] As far as the Arab world and the peace process is concerned, the Egyptian strategy is the same as the Arab strategy as expressed in the final communique of the summit held in Cairo recently. The discord about the Arab position must cease, Arab relations must be rebuilt, and the Arab regime must be rescued.

On the other hand, the peace process must be established, or rather reestablished, on the land-for-peace principle. This principle should be put into effect, because it is not a matter of words. Withdrawal and the rights of the Palestinian people are a must; and negotiations along the Syrian, Lebanese, and Palestinian tracks must resume and continue, because the situation makes it impossible for any state to wait. The risks involved in any delay, obstruction, or stalling for time are very grave. The region should not pay the price of any delay or obstruction for any reason, such as saying that negotiations should be without preconditions. This is meaningless. We are not starting negotiations; they started five years ago. How can we talk today about new conditions or situations?

There is peace, the state of the Arab world, and economic development in the region and Egypt. The Egyptian policy is taking many directions in this connection. There are negotiations with the 15 countries of the European Union to conclude a partnership agreement between Egypt and these states. There is also an inclination to pursue the course of regional cooperation in the Middle East. This regional cooperation does not mean Israel. The center of this cooperation must be in the

Arab world, since Arabs make up the great majority of the region's population.

Hence, if you go back to the summit's final communique, you will find that there is talk about inter-Arab economic cooperation and the revival of an Arab free trade zone. Fortunately, this time things have started to happen immediately. The Arab Economic and Social Council actually met two days ago to review past documents and studies to see what can be done with them and to decide whether to renew them in light of world developments. The Council will submit clear proposals on them to the foreign ministers or to the next Arab summit.

Hence, we are talking about Arab aspects, political aspects involving the Middle East—the peace process, then the revival of the Egyptian and Arab economic roles through cooperation between the two. The most important thing in Egypt today is economic reform. Egyptian economic reform has taken giant steps. This will be the strong point in the Egyptian position, with the success of the economic reform that will qualify Egypt to enter the regional and international economic arena. In short, this is what we are doing at present. In addition, Egypt has its traditional interests at the Arab, African, Islamic, nonaligned, and Third World levels and so on.

[Farghali] Your Excellency's answer focused on economic issues; this prompts me to ask a question now that is near the bottom of my list. The summit resolutions did include some economic ones, but these have not been given due attention by the media — and I am speaking as a member of the media — as if coordination, joint action, unity, solidarity, or any other aspect of Arab action are never established on an economic basis, but on stands vis-a-vis the Israeli enemy or neighbor. Is this true?

[Musa] You have made it so. You members of the media have chosen to focus on one point at the expense of another. Yet you are excused, because the worst thing that happened was the tattered and fragmented Arab situation. When the Arabs meet, this is in itself an important piece of news and emphasis is focused on it. But if Arab relations are to be healthy, then they should be comprehensive. Political relations are complemented by economic ones. Both are based on a common and constant cultural relationship. Hence, the economic issue was high on the summit's agenda. Fortunately, as I already said, the first resolution to be implemented was the economic one.

[Farghali] Going back to the Arab-Israeli issue. It was expected that the summit resolutions would be rejected by the Israeli side even though the whole Israeli stand is unacceptable. What about the West, which is a partner in the peace process?

[Musa] I tell you that the communique issued by the 15-nation summit in Florence was a very good one. It was in line with the objective view of the Palestinian people's right to a state and self-determination, on continuing the negotiations, and on the need for balanced peace and security. It was an extremely important stand by 15 countries. We ought to make sure this statement turns into action.

Then came the G-7 summit, which included several European countries. It also spoke about the principle of land in return for peace. This means that the European stand is progressive, and we welcome it because we want a balanced contribution to the peace process that warns against bringing it down it and introduces a factor of balance into it.

[Farghali] What about the U.S. stand?

[Musa] With regard to the U.S. stance, to tell you frankly, the U.S. role is an important one, which we cannot ignore under the current international circumstances and in view of Israel's special relationship with the United States. The U.S. role will not be effective or fully credible unless it is neutral. In other words, the United States should play the role of an honest mediator. A mediator by definition should be honest. We need to stress the concept of honesty. The U.S. role is necessary. Arab relations with the United States must be strengthened. But for the U.S. role to be effective it should be the role of an honest mediator. Anything less will not be effective.

[Farghali] There are two signs coming from Washington at the same time as these things are happening. One is the fabrication of the Egyptian-Korean armament crisis. There is also something else, which I do not know if it has any real connection here. I would like to hear your view of the stand on Dr. Butrus-Ghali?

[Musa] Regarding the first point, the information that has been cited, referred to, announced, or leaked is generally inaccurate. Despite the accuracy, inaccuracy, correctness, or incorrectness of this topic, we would like to open the file of missiles. If anyone wants to open it with us, we are ready to do so, on condition that the files of all the missiles in the Middle East are also opened, including those of Israel. You cannot talk to me about short-range missiles — irrespective of whether these reports are true or not — yet ignore another country that has intercontinental missiles. When you talk about a range of 2,000 km for missiles, what does that mean? How can you deny me missiles while not denying Israel? No country with any dignity can accept this. Therefore this is unacceptable. That was clearly stated by President Mubarak to all those who broached this topic with him.

[Farghali] Is the U.S. stand on the presence of an Arab Egyptian in the top post of the United Nations linked to the current developments in this region?

[Musa] We are surprised by the stand which has been taken vis-a-vis Dr. Butrus-Ghali. Dr. Butrus-Ghali is one of the most successful UN secretaries general, assuming his post in very difficult circumstances after the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a sole superpower that wished to steer events in a certain, specific way. Whose interest does this stand serve? It is not even in the interest of the United Nations to declare at this time, six months before the election, that there is opposition to the renomination of Dr. Butrus-Ghali.

I was the official spokesman of the Arab summit and told the media that I had been instructed by the Arab summiteers to proclaim their support for Dr. Butrus-Ghali's reelection. I believe that the OAU summit will do the same thing. However, if a certain country—say the United States—adopts a certain stand against or vis-a-vis Dr. Butrus-Ghali, it has a right to do so. It might have changed its mind and now thinks it does not want him in the UN secretary general's post. This, however, is the U.S. attitude, not ours. We have a different and opposite stand. We believe that Dr. Butrus-Ghali's presence at the United Nations adds something good to the organization. He has shown ability and wisdom in running the United Nations. That there should be some opposition to some of his actions is natural. Nevertheless, the general way in which he has run the organization is perfectly sound.

[Farghali] The Israeli prime minister will be in Washington on 9 July and later on will visit Cairo. Do you think that when he visits Cairo, he will reiterate his earlier unacceptable positions?

[Musa] I do not know. We will hear what he has to say when he comes to Cairo.

[Farghali] Still, I am sure that contacts are under way to pave the way for the....

[Musa, interrupting] Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi telephoned me yesterday. Of course Levi and I already know each other from the days of the Madrid conference. He was foreign minister in the former Likud government then. Yesterday he spoke of his desire to maintain communications between us and said that the peace process in general will continue. However, we will only know what the current Israeli policy is when we meet in person. We will learn its details then. We are waiting.

[Farghali] This question is about the relationship between the Egyptian Foreign Ministry and its Israeli counterpart. By following Israeli domestic policy, we have noticed that since the Madrid conference and even before that, new terms—such as doves and hawks—have entered our political language. There is an Israeli view that the Egyptian Foreign Ministry is the hawk of Egyptian politics.

[Musa] Brother, they are free to say what they want. Let them view the Egyptian Foreign Ministry as they wish.

[Farghali] They are saying it is a hawk versus the doves.

[Musa] Sir, let them call it a hawk, a dove, a kite, whatever they want. This name-calling and these epithets do not affect us at all. We pursue the set Egyptian policy and operate in a clear Arab context and in the context of our support for a balanced peace. These matters will not be changed by any name-calling. This policy will be developed and changed only by a balanced peace and a clear political will to move toward such a peace. But to call us hawks! We are only expressing the Egyptian attitude, that of the most senior officials and also that of the people. This is the attitude that the Foreign Ministry expresses. We are not a state within a state. We only express the state's policy.

[Farghali] Before turning to the Arab summit's resolutions, perhaps one should note that these resolutions were upstaged by the terrorist bombing ...

[Musa, interrupting] This was certainly a regrettable incident. Of course we condemned it when it happened. We must certainly seek to maintain the stability of our societies and avoid anything that could undermine or cast a shadow on these societies' stability and progress. Violence leads nowhere and can never produce anything positive. As for the question of one event upstaging another, you media people need something new every day to talk about. The Arab summit, its resolutions, and the new progressive Arab position will constitute one basic step in the general developments of the Middle East and beyond this region for a long time to come.

[Farghali] I meant to call attention to security coordination in the region against terrorism so that this issue may not appear to involve only Egypt and Algeria.

[Musa] Terrorism has never been the problem of this country or that. Those who have arrived at this conclusion only now are a bit late. This is an international problem. Who is responsible for what happened in Oklahoma, Japan, Britain, France, Arab countries in the Middle East, India, Pakistan, and elsewhere? There is a growth of violence everywhere, and all of it is condemned. So, this is neither an Arab nor an Islamic phenomenon; it is an international problem, and hence President Mubarak's call for an international conference on terrorism. This concerns the whole world, not a certain region, religion, or society.

[Farghali] Some Arab summit resolutions have already been put into practice. Through reconciliation meetings and joint agreements, such as that between Egypt and Sudan, the Arabs tried to lay down a mechanism to discuss their problems. Have you already started solving these problems?

[Musa] If you watched the developments that followed the summit — the telephone conversation between King Husayn of Jordan and President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria, the visit to Bahrain by the Qatari foreign minister, the Syrian mediation between Iran and Bahrain, and other developments — you would see that the Arab spirit is making a comeback. This is the most important result of the Arab summit in Cairo.

[Farghali] What about Egyptian-Sudanese reconciliation?

[Musa] The meeting between President Mubarak and President al-Bashir was an important step. We will not return to past Arab situations where a single meeting would solve any problem, no. The meeting between the Egyptian and Sudanese presidents opened the door for a real, rational, and practical treatment of problems that Egypt believes are serious and about which there are UN Security Council resolutions and stances by the neighbors. So, the door is now open for measures to free the region from a problem facing everybody. Let us agree that Arab relations must not be handled through a meeting, or through kisses or hugs; they must be treated objectively. This is the new development that emerged from the Cairo summit. It is not an issue of kisses, open arms, or exaggerated welcomes. You must sit and say: We have this problem; what are we going to do about it? This applies to Egypt and Sudan, Syria and Jordan, and so on.

[Farghali] Minister Amr Musa, once again thank you very much for being with us, and we hope to meet you again.

[Musa] Thank you.

Egypt: Al-Baz Comments on U.S. Role, Egypt's Right To Be Strong

NC0407184396 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1650 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] London, 4 Jul (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, stressed that if the United States wants to continue to play the role of mediator in the peace process then this requires more neutrality, fairness, and justice from it.

Regarding Washington's bias toward Israel, Dr. al-Baz said in an interview published today by the London-based Arabic daily AL-'ARAB: The United States is a superpower and we still regard it as a friendly country. There is much scope for cooperation and there is another area where we see that our interests conflict with each other. He added: We are trying to promote congruence of interests within the scope of cooperation. We are fully aware that the United States has special relations with Israel but we call on the U.S. Administration, Congress, and the media to be more fair. This issue is endangering U.S. credibility, not only in the minds of Arab governments but also in the minds of the Arab nation and peoples and in the Third World countries because they regard the U.S. stand as an example of the stances that Washington takes on other conflicts.

Dr. al-Baz went on to say: We want the United States to tell Israel that it has to comply with the term of reference it has in fact committed itself to, noting that this term of reference is the Madrid conference.

On the European role in the Middle East problem, Dr. al-Baz underlined the importance of this role and said that Europe has important influence and is the continent closest to the region and the one most affected by what goes on there. He said: Europe realizes that security and stability in Europe are linked to and affected by stability in this region. This is why we have called for a more active and influential European role right from the beginning.

He said: We still believe that Europe is not absent. It has not been and will not be so in the future. He stressed the probability that its role will increase in the future for several reasons. He added: President Mubarak explained to French President Jacques Chirac his ideas about activating the European role in the coming stage, particularly as the United States will be absent from the international area because of the presidential elections.

Dr. al-Baz underlined Egypt's right to be a strong country, noting that it is not internationally bound not to possess weapons. He described the clamor from Israel about Egypt's purchase of Scud missiles from North Korea as a "tempest in a teacup."

He said: Egypt is a major country in this region. It is the country that took the first initiative on the peace process; it cannot be accused of seeking war and destruction but is an influential factor in peace. He went on to say: Just because Egypt is maintaining an effective defense force does not mean that this is a danger or a threat to anyone. Continuing the U.S. or other countries' support for Israel, a militarily strong country, while the Arab side — specifically the principal countries, particularly Egypt — become militarily weak is unacceptable.

He added: This situation means, first, an imbalance in the region, and second, that some of the major powers in the region are still thinking that the armed struggle will continue. This is inconsistent with what is going on now, because we are in the stage of the struggle for peace and not the armed struggle.

Egypt: Musa Questions Israeli Meaning in No 'Conditions' for Peace

NC0407075596 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0400 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has asserted the need to try to close the file of the Arab-Israeli conflict. He said this cannot happen before agreement is reached on Israel's withdrawal from the territories it occupied in 1967, Jerusalem, the issue of the refugees, the issue of the right to self-determination, and the features of the new regional relations.

In his speech before a London conference on Middle East economics to establish a balance between security and prosperity, Musa said the region is currently experiencing very dangerous events, particularly after the peace process has become fragile. 'Amr Musa said there was never a belief that the peace process would be the victim of elections in Israel. In fact, he added, we were hoping that Binyamin Netanyahu's government would continue to negotiate with the Syrians, Lebanese, and Palestinians to establish the final peace. But our hopes were dashed when we heard negative reports. Before this dangerous stance emerged, the Arab countries decided to convene the Cairo summit to confront the dangers of this stance and to define the Arabs' position on the peace process. Musa continued: We have now started hearing that the negotiations should resume without conditions. He asked: What are these conditions and what does the Israeli Government mean when it says "without conditions?" What about the agreements that were actually reached?

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa is chairing Egypt's delegation to the meetings of the African countries' foreign ministers, which will be held today in the Cameroonian capital to prepare for the African summit there this week.

Egypt: Papers Welcome Turkey's Erbakan Statements on Relations With Arabs

NC0407073296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0550 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 4 Jul (MENA)—The newspapers AL-AHRAM and AL-AKHBAR welcome statements by Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan on his country's relations with the Arab countries, relations he described as sisterly.

The papers say the Arab and Islamic countries are expecting Erbakan to review the Turkish-Israeli strategic cooperation agreement.

In its comment today AL-AHRAM expresses its hopes that Erbakan will cancel the strategic agreement with Israel so as to eliminate current Arab and Islamic suspicions about Turkey.

The paper notes that Erbakan's positive statements about the Arab countries will only be finalized when this agreement is canceled in the interest of developing Turkey's new relations with the Arab and Islamic countries.

The paper notes that statements by the leader of the Islamic Refah Party have had very positive repercussions among the Arab people. They reveal a positive stance on Arab issues. The paper points in this regard to Erbakan's calls that Israel should withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and adhere to the resolutions issued by the United Nations and that the international forces should withdraw from northern Iraq.

AL-AKHBAR describes a statement Erbakan released after meeting a delegation of officials from the U.S. State Department as a very encouraging beginning to boost relations between Turkey and the Arab countries. The paper says that despite his difficult position, the Turkish prime minister did not hesitate to announce that the first step for guaranteeing Middle East peace lies in Israel's commitment to implement the UN resolutions that call on it to withdraw from the territories it occupied after the June 1967 war, among them the Syrian Golan Heights.

The paper says the courageous spirit Erbakan showed indicates that the Turkish Parliament, in which the Refah Party has a majority, might intervene to review the Turkish-Israeli military agreements. These agreements contradict the distinguished relations with the Arab and Islamic countries that Erbakan is trying to strengthen.

The newspaper expresses its hope that Erbakan will succeed in reviewing the strategic agreement between Turkey and Israel during his term as Turkish prime minister.

Egypt: Writer Notes Change of Popular Sentiment on U.S.

NC0407142196 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic 26 Jun 96 p 1

[Article by editor in chief Jamal Badawi: "We Are Fed Up, Mr. Christopher"]

[FBIS Translated Text] When Mr. Christopher arrives in Cairo today, he will find a different public opinion from what he used to find in his earlier tours. I wish his excellency would spare an hour of his short trip to tour the streets of Cairo and listen to what the Egyptians have to say about the bitterness they harbor for the American policy which has stood both overtly and covertly by the side of injustice and departed from the principles of justice and liberty, on which the United States was built.

We are fed up, Mr. Christopher, with what we had to put up with because of you over the past few years. Who would believe that the U.S. Government would cover up for Israel's crimes in Qana, which claimed the lives of scores of children and women, and volunteer to fabricate excuses and justifications for them. Who would believe that it would persist in pandering to the criminal by banning the publication of a report condemning that criminal? When the UN secretary general—Butrus-Ghali—insisted on publicizing the report, he was punished by dismissal from his post by the U.S. President, who handles the affairs of the international organization as though it was a private ranch or a branch of his State Department. This conduct was humiliating for the Egyptian people, the Arab people, and the Muslim people to whom Butrus Ghali belongs. President Clinton's tone showed animosity and antipathy as he declared that "there is absolutely no way that this decision will be revoked," as if the secretary general was one of the hired hands on the Clinton family's ranch. The whole world knows that the U.S. President made that vindictive decision only to please the great sons of Zion.

Mr. Christopher, your unjust and illogical conduct has forced the people to turn away from you. They no longer believe your claims that you foster peace, freedom, justice, equality, and human rights. It has become clear that all these slogans are for local consumption to deceive the people. This has made the people of the world boil inside with rejection and extremism, which soon turned into terrorism, murder, and explosions that hit you in the heart of your own country just as it hit us in ours, because we believed your claims. But here you are, taking the side of the oppressor and turning a deaf ear to the screams of the murdered, the tortured, the desperate, and the victims of the new Nazis ruling Israel.

On Cairo's streets you will hear the reverberation of the Arab summit that was held a few days ago. You will see that Egyptian sentiments are charged against you, supportive of the summit resolutions, and aspiring for more Arab solidarity that builds a front capable of protecting Arab rights, dignity, and wealth. You thought that Arab unity had collapsed or that the glow of Arab struggle had died away. But it turned out that it was glowing under the ashes, and when the wind of challenge blew from Israel, the Goliath woke up. You will find that the Egyptian people, with their various sectors and parties, are supportive of President Mubarak's Arab approach, because he put Egypt in its rightful place at the head of the Arab convoy.

You will find a change of tone and attitude. We hope that when you return to your country you will place the facts before your government. Hopefully it will recognize the new development in the Arab world and return to the side of right, justice, and peace.

Egypt: Christopher Criticized for Supporting Netanyahu Positions

NC0407062196 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 26 Jun 96 p 1

[Editorial by chief editor Jalal Duwaydar: "Netanyahu and His Subordinate, Representative of the Strongest Country"]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrives in Cairo today after visiting Israel for talks with Prime Minister Netanyahu. I was sorry to hear remarks by the secretary of state of the world's strongest country, the sponsor of the peace process in the Middle East on the support and backing of which Israel relies in exercising its policy and aggressive practices in the Middle East. Christopher found nothing to say at the joint news conference after the talks, other than to approve all Netanyahu's answers, which were replete with allegations and were misleading. This exposes a clear intention to obstruct the peace process in the Middle East.

Christopher said he supports Netanyahu's stance on resuming the peace talks without conditions, which, according to the officials in the Likud Bloc, means nonrecognition of the land-for-peace principle and commitment to the three Israeli no's—no to withdrawal from the Golan, no to the establishment of a Palestinian state, and no to negotiations over Jerusalem. Any reading of these no's shows that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu has resolved to deal a blow to the peace process—under the auspices of the United States. With this disgraceful support, which does not befit the strongest country, Christopher is declaring to the world that he is not an honest partner in the peace process and that he is not concerned about security and stability in the Middle East except according to Israel's ambitions and wishes, even if this runs counter to the interests of the American people themselves.

In an organized escape that seems to have been agreed upon and imposed on Christopher, who appeared humiliated and helpless at the news conference, which was carried by CNN, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu declined to answer questions on the peace negotiations and on implementing the agreement to withdraw from Hebron. He refused to reply and seemed intent on avoiding clarification of his stance on peace and these issues, beating about the bush and linking the peace Israel wants with its security, taking no notice of any other consideration. Pitifully, Christopher agreed with him.

According to all the signs U.S. Secretary of State Christopher arrived in Israel not to advance the peace process, but to beg Netanyahu to express satisfaction with U.S. policy. Christopher expressed this by boldly and enthusiastically declaring that relations between Washington and Tel Aviv are strong and will not be affected by the change in the Israeli Government. Netanyahu, for his part, described these relations as a rock. As we congratulate Christopher on Netanyahu's satisfaction, we must also congratulate him on his insistence on violating the resolutions of international legitimacy and contempt for Arab dignity. Christopher and Netanyahu's remarks show contempt for the United Nations and for every international agreement. This is a serious gamble with peace and with the interests of the American people in the region and those of the Israeli people themselves.

Libya

Libya: 'Major Clash,' 'Extensive Security Presence' in Banghazi

MM0507101296 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 4 Jul 96 pp 1, 6

[Unattributed report: "Prominent Oppositionist, Security Officials Killed in Clash in Banghazi"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH — An authoritative source in the opposition "National Front for the Salvation of Libya" [NFSL] has said that a major clash occurred in Banghazi on 30 June between the regime's elements and armed opposition groups.

The source added that there is currently an extensive security presence in the city, whose streets are being combed by mechanized patrols as troops were brought in from the Surt area (in the center of Libya) following the clash, in which Muhammad al-Hami, official in charge of the "Islamic Martyrs Movement" [harakat al-shuhada' al-islamiyah], in addition to a prominent member of the Revolutionary Committees in Banghazi known as al-Shuhaybiyah were killed. The sources stressed that the regime lost a colonel named al-Khashmi in the same clash. The name of this colonel emerged in May, when young oppositionists were pursued inside the country. He had been wounded in one of the clashes and was sent to France for medical treatment, but he was killed in the recent Banghazi clash, nearly a month after his return [from France].

As is known, a movement calling itself the Islamic Martyrs Movement told AL-HAYAH on 12 June that it had killed Lieutenant Colonel Miftah Ba'yu, head of the anti-atheism office in Banghazi, and it claimed responsibility for the killing of two Libyan officers in front of the Egyptian Consulate in Banghazi, pointing out that its members participated in the Darnah incidents two months ago. The person who spoke in the movement's name said that Muhammad al-Hami, who was killed a few days ago, had assigned him to make the telephone call.

Meanwhile, the authoritative NFSL source has said that security services killed a young man opposed to the regime in the center of Banghazi two weeks ago; his name is al-Ghiryani, and his body, according to the source, was left in the street for a full day and then placed in a vehicle that was driving around Banghazi.

It is worth noting that sporadic clashes have increased recently and that small opposition groups sometimes take the initiative to fight the regime's organs. They do not belong to one organization, but to various opposition groups.

Mauritania

Mauritania: Opposition UFD Decides To Participate in October Elections

AB0307185096 Libreville Africa No. 1 in French 1215 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The big news in Mauritania is unquestionably the decision by the Union of Democratic Forces [UFD], the leading opposition party, to finally participate in the forthcoming October legislative elections after initially refusing to do so. It will be recalled that the UFD had boycotted the very first multiparty legislative and senatorial elections held in 1992.

Clearly, this decision constitutes a major headway and observers in Nouakchott believe that UFD's participation might lead to significant changes in Mauritania's parliamentary landscape that has hitherto been dominated by the ruling party. Salem Mechbour Salem contacted the leader of the Mauritanian opposition and UFD chairman Ahmed Ould Daddah for his reaction. Ahmed Ould Daddah explains here the reasons for this turnabout:

[Begin Daddah recording] After observing that the last party congress, which was exceptionally well-attended, held very detailed and thorough discussions on all outstanding issues, especially the party's commitment to the democratic process, and taking due account of the aspirations of our activists, notably the grassroots, we have decided to assume our responsibility and to demonstrate, once again, our goodwill and eagerness to do everything possible to move the democratic process forward. We have, therefore, decided to participate in the upcoming legislative elections slated for October. However, the executive bureau has directed the standing committee to continue to personally handle the issue and to takes any necessary measures that the said standing committee may consider advisable. [end recording]

Morocco

Morocco: 'Coolness' Noted in Relations With Egypt Over Summit, Sahara

LD0407201096 Casablanca AL-ITTIHAD AL-ISHTIRAKI in Arabic 2 Jul 96 p 1

["This Report" — unattributed]

[FBIS Translated Text] It seems that Egyptian-Moroccan relations are heading for more coolness. Diplomatic sources indicate that Cairo is opposed to Rabat's invitation to hold an Arab summit to diagnose the disagreements and problems in the Arab world.

To this coolness is added what happened during the holding of the Arab summit in Cairo 10 days ago, when the Egyptian Foreign Ministry distributed maps containing the so-called "Saharan Republic" south of Morocco, the border of which [Morocco], the Egyptian television newsreader said, was the Sahara (!), a matter which provoked a Moroccan reaction during which the official delegation threatened to withdraw from the summit..

Morocco: Sources React to Mandela's Decision To Recognize Polisario

LD0307170196 Rabat MAP in English 1311 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, July 3 (MAP) — Moroccan official spheres have expressed "surprise" at the statement by South African leader Nelson Mandela who was reported as saying he was determined to recognize the Polisario [Popular Front for the Liberation of Saquia El Hamra and Rio de Oro], an Algerian-backed guerilla movement claiming independence of the Western Sahara, the international daily in Arabic "AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT" reported on Wednesday [3 July].

According to the newspaper, Moroccan authorities have multiplied contacts with Johannesburg to check the veracity of Mandela's statement. The latter, who was interviewed Tuesday by a group of French journalists, said he would recognize this movement in spite of pressures by Arab countries leaders and by the United Nations Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali. The daily quoted the Moroccan spheres as saying that Rabat prefers to ponder on the issue before elaborating an answer. This is the third time in the course of this year that South African officials announce their intention to recognize the Polisario and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), proclaimed by this guerilla movement.

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT recalled the recent contacts between Rabat and Johannesburg and the visit, two months ago, of South African foreign minister to Morocco, saying that both countries expressed commitment to promote cooperation and political consultation, a fact which enabled to circumvent the issue of recognition of the Polisario.

The South African leader who recalled Morocco's moral and material support to the African National Congress in its fight against apartheid, conceded that Arab leaders' pressure make it very difficult for the time being to recognize the Polisario, but made it clear that he will do it because, he said, the majority of member states of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) had recognized it.

The Western Sahara issue is being dealt with by the United Nations which is trying since 1992 to organize a referendum to determine the future of this former Spanish colony, retrieved by Morocco in 1975 under the November 14 Madrid accords and whose independence is claimed by the Algerian-backed guerilla movement.

The referendum process has come to a standstill in view of divergences between the parties to the conflict over the criteria of eligible voters.

Sudan

Sudan: Foreign Minister, Saudi Counterpart Hold Talks in Riyadh

EA0307114796 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1404 GMT 2 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 2 Jul (SUNA) — Dr. Mustafa 'Uthman Isma'il, minister of state in the Ministry of Foreign Relations, met His Royal Highness Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal, the Saudi foreign minister, yesterday in Riyadh, in line with his three-day official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which began yesterday.

A SUNA report from Riyadh said both men discussed relations between Sudan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and means of (?strengthening) and developing them. The minister of state will also meet his excellency the Saudi minister of (?information), as well as the secretary general of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the secretary general of the Islamic World League, and the director general of the Islamic Development Fund.

Sudan: Nubah SPLA Commander Denies Mountain Region Breaking Away

AB0407173196 London BBC World Service in English 1505 GMT 4 Jul 96

[From the "Focus on Africa" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] There have been reports in the past week of a split developing in the Nubah Mountains Liberation Movement of Yusuf Kuwah. Kuwah has been allied to the southern Sudan rebel SPLA [Sudanese People's Liberation Army] of John Garang but at the end of last week, a Nubah dissident called Muhammad Harun Kafi Abu Ras called from Nairobi to say Kuwah was being ousted because they were fed up with the SPLA because they have not been given any (?planned) jobs in the SPLA and like other groups that had split from John Garang, they were prepared to start talks with the Khartoum government. But today, Yusuf Kuwah himself has called us up from Nairobi to rebut Mohammad Harun's claims. Mary Harper asked him what his position was:

[Begin recording] [Kuwah] Mohammad Harun Kafi has never been in the Nubah mountains since 1987, so you do not expect somebody like being away from the Nubah mountains has any base there. [sentence as heard] So, whatever he says, they are a group of people, there are five of them in Nairobi. So, I categorically deny that he has any force there or there is any split there.

[Harper] But this gentleman did mention some rather serious grievances. He said that people in the Nubah mountains were not properly represented in the SPLA and therefore, they had to form a different organization.

[Kuwah] I do not deny that there are some few problems here and there but it is not to the extent of breaking away because we do not think we can achieve our goals without going with the SPLA. In fact, SPLA depends on us.

[Harper] So, what are these minor problems that you say you have with the SPLA?

[Kuwah] The only problem we have is that we are far away from the south. We have some difficulties in our logistics. That is all and this is not the problem with SPLA. It is a problem of our position and so on.

[Harper] So, what are you going to do now?

[Kuwah] What I want to tell you exactly is that what is said by Muhammad Harun is not Mohammad Harun's own will. It is the government because he has been with them. So, what I am saying, he does not represent anybody in the Nubah Mountains. He just represents himself, his brother, and three others who are not satisfied with what is going on.

[Harper] But, lots of different splinter groups within the Sudanese rebels, have recently signed agreement with the Sudanese Government. So, now you have got that very same situation in the Nubah mountains and you are going to be more isolated.

[Kuwah] Not at all. I tell you not at all because just as Mohammad Harun Kafi has been here since 1984, they are roaming around in Nairobi. So, this is Nairobi's faction. It has nothing to do with the Nubah mountains. [end recording]

Bahrain

Bahrain: Minister Hopes Iran Will Respond to Syrian Mediation Effort

JN0407134496 (Internet) Al-Ayyam WWW in Arabic 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Bahrain welcomed Iran's response to Syria's efforts to stop the media campaigns as an initial step toward improving Bahraini-Iranian relations. In a statement to WAKH, Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa', minister of cabinet affairs and information, said: We welcome Iran's response to Syrian efforts to stop the media campaigns as an initial step. We hope this will be followed by Iran's reconsideration of its policy toward Bahrain and the states in the region. We hope they will cease interfering in domestic affairs and will improve relations within the principles of good neighborly relations and international cooperation.

During the past few days, Syria's Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' conducted two tours between Manama and Tehran in an attempt to convince Iran not to interfere in Bahrain's domestic affairs after the agreement Arab leaders reached during their recent summit in Cairo.

In his statement, al-Mutawwa' said that Bahrain suffered from Iranian media campaigns against it. He noted: Stopping these campaigns is a positive measure, which we welcome. However, this is only an initial step that must be followed by other steps on the part of the Islamic Republic of Iran toward reinforcing and respecting the principles of good neighborliness and noninterference in Bahrain's domestic affairs. He added: We hope that Iran will respond to Syrian efforts in this regard.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: UK Officials—King in Good Health, Meets With Rifkind

MS0407104996 London THE DAILY TELEGRAPH in English 4 Jul 96 p 10

[Report by Gerald Butt: "'Fit' King Cheers Worried Saudis"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jeddah — Rumours that King Fahd is seriously ill and about to leave Saudi Arabia for retirement in Spain have abated after a meeting with Malcolm Rifkind, the [British] Foreign Secretary.

British officials said yesterday that the king appeared to be "in extremely good physical shape". This will be a relief to Saudi leaders trying to cope with abrupt changes of fortune.

The era of profligate spending has been replaced by one of economic decline and worries about terrorism.

Ten days after the bombing of the United States compound near Dhahran, which killed 19 Americans, Western diplomats and Saudi officials admit they are worried.

Even if the bombers got help from outside the kingdom (there is no evidence of this), they are assumed to be Saudi nationals — like those who bombed a U.S. military building in Riyadh last November.

But the blast has not signalled the imminent collapse of the Saudi kingdom, as some Western commentators had suggested.

But that does not mean all is well. The blasts have shattered the security and serenity of which Saudi Arabia was so proud and on which business confidence is built.

There is evidence that the House of Saud faces a challenge from within its borders that is set to continue for as long as U.S. military personnel remain in the kingdom.

Senior Saudi businessmen say the bombs are probably the work of a tiny minority. But the fear is that the militants are expressing widespread discontent among young Saudis. "The root of the problem," one of the businessmen said, "is economic decline."

Estimates of unemployment vary between 10 and 20 per cent but all show the total, mainly of young people, rising.

The problem, say Saudis, is that many of the rich and powerful from the ruling family are not adjusting their way of life. As a result, their extravagance is more noticeably distasteful than before.

Young Saudis accuse the House of Saud of deviating from strict interpretation of Wahhabism, an ultra-orthodox branch of Sunni Islam.

As a result, anti-government and anti-American feelings are coalescing around religious extremism.

The result is that the House of Saud is facing double pressure — from unemployed and disaffected young Wahhabis and from Western-inclined liberals who accuse the ruling family of mismanagement and misappropriation of funds.

With no free media and with power still in the hands of a few members of the ruling family, many Saudis are worried because they do not know how the government intends to cope with the rapidly changing fortunes.

Saudi Arabia: Opposition Group—Increase in Political Violence 'Inevitable'

MM0307140396 London AL-ISLAH in Arabic 1 Jul 96 pp 1, 2

[From Bulletin No. 16 issued by the Islamic Reform Movement of Saudi Arabia received via fax on 2 July: "Al-Khubar Explosion: How Should We Interpret It?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The United States wants its forces to remain secure. Fine, but has the United States studied the case as it should? Has the United States grasped the dimensions, depth, and magnitude of the problem? Does the United States even know exactly what the problem is?

If we try to study the problem from the American angle we will perhaps analyze it on three levels:

The first level: This is the most superficial and naive of the three, maintaining that these problems are caused by a group of troublemakers of the kind who exist all over the world, and that preventing more such problems only requires an intensification of security precautions and the punishment of those found to be involved, to deter others. That kind of thinking undoubtedly indicates a complete failure to understand anything connected with the environment in which the explosion occurred as well as a failure to understand the circumstances and factors of the place and time in question.

The fact that the explosion occurred after the four people accused of perpetrating the first explosion had been crucified and killed demonstrated that that only encouraged the second explosion instead of preventing it. Published reports confirm that those who carried out the explosion did so with cool and calm nerves, and in fact a number of visitors to a public park near the scene of the incident were told by the two people who had reportedly climbed out of the truck that something dangerous was about to occur and that they had better leave.

As regards the intensification of security precautions, that is indeed strange in two ways. First, how can it be the armed forces' task to maintain security, only for them to have a security problem emerge within them? Second, security precautions, however stringent, are useless against determined people, and whatever the precautions, there is bound to be a loophole through which they can reach their target. If the Americans wanted to provide protection for their soldiers at their headquarters and in their movements, activities, and work, that could become a concern and a psychological complex that would turn their continued presence in the country into a nightmare of worry.

The second level of thinking is one of seeing the problem as 'abstract' opposition to the U.S. presence, with such opposition caring about nothing else. That would mean that such opposition was represented by a distinct group championing the sole cause of getting the Americans out, and if that group had been formed for that particular purpose then it would have a distinct entity which could be dealt with as a single entity. If the problem is understood in that way then it can be solved in one of two ways: Either the Americans leave, or the entity is hit and completely destroyed. Since it is out of the question for the Americans to leave, at least for the time being, then the only other option is to identify and completely liquidate that entity.

But this is probably a misinterpretation of the problem, for many reasons. The first is that the Americans have been in the peninsula since the Gulf war. So why should the guns be pointed at them now and only now, when it was easier to hit them in the past, at a time when the circumstances were much better than now for the trends that want them out. Second — and let us say it frankly — the experience of movements in Saudi society does not qualify them to form a special entity for such a major military target. The current social fabric does not allow that anyway. We know our society and our conditions better, and we hope that people we hold dear will not be angry with us.

The third level of thinking is one maintaining that we go beyond the American dimension in our portrayal of the problem and see the explosions as the work of some different groups created by complex circumstances related to the society, the new developments in it, and the way the regime handles these developments. That would mean that these groups were completely different from the single organized entity in terms of their numbers and diversity and the fact that they have emerged as a reaction without a clear strategy, finding the American target easy in the material sense as well as in the moral sense and aiming their arrows at it, perhaps encouraged by the tremendous, resounding media echo created by "American blood," especially after the Riyadh explosion and other incidents in the world. In other words, these groups are a result of the accumulation of events, not groups or entities formed with specific programs.

On the basis of our understanding of the situation in the "Kingdom," we favor that interpretation and see it as a natural outcome of the succession of political and social events. Many people well acquainted with "Saudi" affairs had expected this outcome on the basis of that interpretation of the society, events, and real situation, as follows:

When the Americans came during the Gulf crisis feelings of hostility toward them were aroused, and some people probably considered taking military measures against them, but the entire society, and especially the religious youth, were loyal to the ulema, whether official or unofficial. The ulema, including the young ulema, were able to convince the zealous groups that the solution to the problem of the Americans lay in the regime and not in the Americans themselves. After the Gulf crisis there were repeated calls for reform and society, under the leadership of the youth ulema, embarked on political action — something the Al Sa'ud family was not used to. Its first reaction was rejection, which after a number of years turned into repression and open confrontation. Most of the young ulema were arrested in 1994, and their role in the equation was eliminated. The role of the official ulema was eliminated in another way. The Al Sa'ud family destroyed their credibility by using them in many statements supporting state decisions which flagrantly violated Islam and entrenched dictatorship and despotism. So the youth were left without credible leadership to control their actions. Since the arrest of the youth ulema the authorities have implemented a harsh program offering maximum provocation to the youth, making them feel that they have been targeted for being religious and for wanting reform. At the same time the Al Sa'ud family closed the door to every peaceful reform, leaving no room for expression, message, speech, or article. In fact, the Al Sa'ud family sought to consolidate all the old rules by which it used to govern the country, including the belief that it owned the peninsula not only as a regime but also as actual owner, and that its members are the ones who know all about politics, religion, and economics while others know nothing. Furthermore, that family continued to plunder public wealth, control the state's resources, and mete out collective and individual injustice, denying people their rights and their property, discriminating against people, and giving preference to the Al Sa'ud family, relatives, and kinfolk.

As a result, provocation continued to build up against the young who had wanted guidance but were left to decide and make fatwas for themselves. Another factor was created by the bad economic conditions resulting in the spread of unemployment, deprivation, and suffering, seen against a background of luxury and abundance enjoyed by the ruling family. That created the feeling in some of the young that they had nothing to fear and nothing to lose.

That atmosphere of zealous and provoked youth without a leadership to guide their zeal was fertile ground for the creation of groups, not of just one group, believing in the use of force. It should be known that the use of force is tantamount to a psychological barrier which, once broken, encourages others to use it. The more it is used, the greater the chances of its repetition. Studying reactions after the two incidents, we note that the first incident surprised all sectors of society and only a few people were gleeful about it; but in the case of the second incident, many young people considered to belong to that trend saw it as a good sign and were happy about it. If the incident is repeated again, the circle could perhaps expand beyond that trend. If we interpret the issue in that way, it means that the issue is on its way to becoming more complex and widespread and could soon become a phenomenon whereby a considerable number of the young become supporters of and subscribers to that trend.

How, then, is the phenomenon to be addressed? The real solution necessitates going back to society itself, restoring its equilibrium, and eliminating the anomaly that has afflicted it. There has to be an acceptance of the historic change that has occurred in society, with an acknowledgement that you cannot turn the clock back. This calls for acceptance and implementation of all calls for reform. If the Americans are serious about immediately securing the position of their forces, then the first easy and direct step that could be taken would be the release and full rehabilitation of all the political detainees and their acceptance on the platform of social leadership where they belong.

Failing that, there is no hope of stopping the phenomenon, which could go beyond American targets next time. Every operation will be something of a public relations exercise that will increase the number of followers of that trend. We are sure that if the phenomenon spreads in the peninsula, the situations in Egypt and Algeria will look like "child's play" by comparison because of the nature of the peninsula's people and because the security and armed forces there can easily be infiltrated.

In any event, this scenario looks inevitable because there is no ruling institution in the Kingdom that can deal with the challenge. The king's illness has created a disjointed state, four states within a state. The Al Sa'ud family members will give priority to the conflict among them over the king's position and will not think about the country's or the nation's interests. Nayif and his brothers will insist on the current policy, which will certainly lead us to that scenario. God protect our country from those with evil in their hearts.

Saudi Arabia: Dissident Predicts More Bombing Incidents

MM0407190596 London BBC Radio Four Network in English 0530 GMT 27 Jun 96

[Interview with Saudi dissident Muhammad al-Mas'ari by James Naughtie; place and date not given; from the "Today" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Naughtie] A short time ago I spoke to Muhammad al-Mas'ari, the prominent Saudi dissident who is fighting expulsion from Britain. He told me that he regarded the American presence in Saudi Arabia as illegitimate, from both an Islamic and democratic point of view.

[Al-Mas'ari] An illegitimate situation can be fixed in different ways. You could, for example, do the way which we are choosing — that's changing the government and asking the Americans politely and firmly to go. And if they don't go, then this means a state of war in an internationally accepted and clean sense. But other people may choose to go to war directly now, like these groups who are doing that. So the Americans have become a very convenient target — being the shield of Al Sa'ud, standing between Al Sa'ud and the people — and they are quite an easy target from a religious and moral point of view for those...

[Naughtie, interrupting] But you appear, on the one hand, to be appealing to some sort of democratic principle when you argue that the American presence is illegitimate, and yet you also seem to justify something which most people would regard as being in opposition to that principle — namely an attack on people in the manner that we saw in Dhahran.

[Al-Mas'ari] We should recognize that these are people and human beings, but these are soldiers, and they are trained and dispatched there for a fight.

[Naughtie] You regard this as a war.

[Al-Mas'ari] No, I would say the war or a struggle, but I wouldn't use the word "war." It is a struggle. Al Sa'ud — they have invited the American forces and they are fully responsible for that, they should be held accountable.

[Naughtie] Well, what it boils down to, Dr. al-Mas'ari, is that you don't have any problem with this bombing. As far as you're concerned, that's just a tactic in the course of an assault on what you regard as an illegitimate presence.

[Al-Mas'ari] No, no. Indeed, if I have no problem I would have prepared such a bomb myself. I do have a problem.

[Naughtie] You would have prepared such a bomb yourself?

[Al-Mas'ari] If I have no problem. But I have a problem — the problem is that I am not absolutely certain that the Americans do not have a de-facto contract, let us say, or a covenant with us. This is the only thing preventing me to do such action. I feel that formally, because the regime invited them, and formally because internationally accepted standards regard this presence as legitimate — although it is only formally, essentially it is not — that there is a doubt about the fact that they are our target. And this doubt is sufficient for me to exclude such action from my side. But in the other minds who did that, there is no doubt about that. They have another point of view.

[Naughtie] What happens now?

[Al-Mas'ari] I think more of that will happen. I don't think we are able to convince the people who say that the Saudi regime is an apostate, is an enemy of Islam. It has invited forces.... [pauses] His invitation and his covenant is completely void, is worthless. Is as good as the Americans they have jumped on the border and invaded directly [sentence as heard]. This is also a point of view which we have, intellectually, to regard as very strong. I think it's not as strong as my point of view, but the problem [is that] you will be facing groups having this point of view all the time, and the general population — all of them — they regard this presence as not legitimate. I challenge the regime to make a poll or a popular vote under international supervision, then we will see which percentage approve the Americans — you will be shocked.

[Naughtie] Dr. Al-Mas'ari, thank you very much for talking to us.

Saudi Arabia: Daily—No U.S., Foreign 'Military Base' in Country

JN0407193596 Riyadh AL-JAZIRAH in Arabic 30 Jun 96 p 3

[Editorial: "Wrong Interpretations of Some Media Organs"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Many media organs, particularly Western media, made unjustified mistakes when reporting on the terrorist crime perpetrated in the city of al-Khubar last Tuesday [25 June].

Those who made these mistakes might say that they fall within the framework of their own interpretations while reporting on the crime, the investigations, and security and political analyses in terms of choosing their words. However, we can also say that these interpretations are shamefully incomplete and media men, who shoulder ethical, political, security, and enlightening responsibility, should not make these mistakes.

One of the most important factors in making these mistakes is the fact that those media men did not try to determine accurate information and abstract facts through authoritative Saudi security sources, who are responsible for revealing the circumstances of the crime and the results of the investigations, provided that this will not affect the investigations.

The doors of Saudi officials — security and non-security — have always been open before all those who seek to access facts and correct information, particularly when there is a crime like the al-Khubar crime which is strange to the peaceful Saudi society.

One of the media mistakes is to refer to the housing complex which was the target of the crime as "a U.S. base." This housing complex is affiliated with the Ministry of Defense; it is a housing complex for foreigners, not all of them are Americans, and this was proven by the lists of those wounded in the explosion.

The known fact, which Saudi officials could have told those who wrote their news reports and analyses, is that there is no U.S. military base in Saudi Arabia and there is no other foreign military base in the kingdom.

Therefore, those who used the term "base" did so either out of ignorance or out of an evil intention. They made an incorrect or incomplete interpretation and they did not seek the truth from Saudi officials.

Also, the attempt to portray the Saudi investigators' rejection of requests by certain foreign investigators to take part in the investigation as "noncooperation" has a suspicious purpose. It is a natural rejection which is in harmony with the principle of national sovereignty. Saudi officials and investigators are confident and capable of finding the criminals. This, however, does not mean that they reject any cooperation with any party that has information for them.

We want to reiterate our call to all those who are loyal to this giving homeland — citizens and residents — to cooperate with security officials and to present any minor or ordinary information to the investigators to help them analyze it because this might lead them to a thread which will take them to the right road toward the dens of criminals.

Iraq: 'Aziz—U.S. 'Impeding' Implementation of Oil-for-Food Deal

JN0307143696 Baghdad INA in English 1100 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The United States is impeding the immediate implementation of the oil-for-food deal Iraq has signed with the UN last May, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz said in an interview made available last week and published by the BAGHDAD OBSERVER on Wednesday [3 July]. 'Aziz, speaking to the Swedish Network Formula Broadcast, LTD, in Baghdad, said the issue of selling Iraqi oil and purchasing badly-needed food and medicine for Iraqis suffering under six years of UN trade sanctions had not been solved yet.

"The Americans are putting a lot of difficulties in the course of the implementation (of the pact)," 'Aziz said. "The American suggestions concerning the selling of oil and the purchase of goods are rather complicated," 'Aziz said.

'Aziz said Iraq and the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) reached an agreement resolving the recent standoff between them on inspection. "After several meetings and talks, we reached an agreement," 'Aziz said. He said a program of action was also agreed upon by him and UNSCOM's chairman Rolf Ekeus during his visit to Baghdad which ended recently. "We also reached a joint program of action (in which) we defined issues which have to be addressed in the future ".

Iraq: Mission 'Refutes' U.S. 'Allegations' on Food Distribution

JN0407121796 Baghdad INA in English 1040 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] New York, July 4, INA — Iraq has refuted American allegations about the food and medicine distribution plan submitted to the U.N. by Iraq, saying the allegations aim to delay the implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed by Iraq and U.N. on May 20.

In a press statement circulated here, the Iraqi mission to the U.N. said U.S. State Department spokesman has aired some allegations on the content of the distribution plan, delivered to the secretary-general on Thursday [4 July].

The Iraqi statement said the texts of the two paragraphs of the distribution plan which refer to computers and spare parts for helicopters were mentioned in the plan in the light of coordination and cooperation with U.N. representatives in Iraq, including the team that visited Iraq recently.

It explained that the plan referred to the computers only in the paragraph which says that ignoring secondary school or university education would lead to a long-term shortage of important manpower in Iraq. Items like reference books, lab equipment and computers for educational purposes are not available in Iraq. Therefore the distribution plan proposes the import of five computers only to be used by the registrar office of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

The Iraqi mission also referred to the American allegations about the spare parts, saying the plan does not contain any thing other than importing equipment for helicopters to combat pests which the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) can buy and supervise under the approval of the Sanctions Committee.

Iraq: Barzani Appeals to Clinton, Others To End Turkish Attacks

JN0307205496 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1800 GMT 3 Jul 96

["Text" of message from Mas'ud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, to U.S. President Bill Clinton, French President Jacques Chirac, British Prime Minister John Major, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and Turkish President Suleyman Demirel; date not given—read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] Respected U.S. President Bill Clinton, respected French President Jacques Chirac, respected British Prime Minister John Major, respected German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and respected Turkish President Suleyman Demirel. Gentlemen: For two months now, the Iraqi Kurdistan border areas with Turkey have been exposed to air raids and artillery shelling by the Turkish Army forces, which swept over the border several times.

During that period, these forces shelled more than 20 villages, most of which were reconstructed with the help of the world charity organizations. Some of these villages came under shelling several times. As a result, approximately 2,000 families from these and other nearby villages were displaced and scores of citizens, mostly children and women, were either martyred or wounded.

These operations took place within the official safe haven, and we have so far made many attempts to make the Turkish Army end its operations, which it is carrying out under the pretext of chasing the supporters of the Kurdistan Workers' Party. Regrettably, the Turkish Army is escalating its operations. From 2400 to 0230 on 1-2 June 1996, it carried out an air raid on the village of

Mansur, which is located northeast of the city of Zakho, in which the MCC [not further identified] headquarters are located. The Turkish air raid destroyed and burned the village, martyring or wounding scores of citizens, and causing severe damage to cattle and other property.

The people of Iraqi Kurdistan view these operations with anger, concern, and doubt because they used to live in these areas, which were officially declared as safe havens, and because they know that nobody has the right to launch any military attack on them.

While we condemn these operations and attacks on Iraqi Kurdistan, which we view as aggression, interference, and a flagrant violation of human rights, we look forward to your intervention to put an end to these aggressions and interferences, as well as to compliance with the UN Security Council's resolution on establishing a safe haven for the Kurdish people.

Undoubtedly, the continuation of these operations will heighten tension in the region and will prompt the people of Kurdistan to take necessary measures to defend their lives and property, as self-defense is a legitimate right for every nation. Please accept my best regards.

[Signed] Mas'ud Barzani
[Dated] 3 July 1996, Iraqi Kurditsan, Salah al-Din

Iraq: Paper—U.S. Seeks To Impose 'Total Hegemony' via UN

JN0407141696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0630 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 4 Jul (INA) — In an article today, AL-THAWRAH, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says the report of the UN secretary general on the Israeli bombing of Qana in Lebanon is the main reason for U.S. declared objection to renewing the term of Butrus Butrus-Ghali in office. The role played by Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali in reaching the memorandum of understanding on oil for food and medicine between Iraq and the UN General Secretariat is also among the fundamental reasons the U.S. objected to Butrus-Ghali's reappointment.

The newspaper adds: The problem between the United States and Butrus-Ghali is that the United States wants the United Nations to serve as a cover to its conduct and schemes against other nations and wants to use it as a tool in its conflicts and wars with other countries.

AL-THAWRAH asserts that what the United States wants is no longer possible in light of many international developments. This is not because Butrus-Ghali opposes the U.S. desire and wants to maintain UN independence, but because balance is being restored gradually to the international situation and it is no longer possible for one country to impose its will and dominate the United Nations.

The paper adds that the United States wants to impose its total hegemony on what was called in 1990 the new world order. The United States started to feel that there is a great difference between the conduct of former UN secretary general de Cuellar and the current secretary general, Butrus-Ghali, especially during the last couple of years. De Cuellar worked sincerely to achieve U.S. interests at any cost, even at the expense of the international organization's credibility and reputation. The United States gave orders to de Cuellar and he obeyed these orders. The United States also asked him to conduct suspicious missions and tasks outside his prerogatives.

AL-THAWRAH says the international situation has changed in the past five years. The UN secretary general is no longer able to faithfully attend to U.S. interests only. Recent international changes, especially the stands and policies of major countries, compelled Butrus-Ghali to act on the basis that there are several influential states at the United Nations and that it is neither reasonable nor logical that he should comply with the desires of one country, which thinks it has the right to control the world order.

Iraq: Intelligence Chief Claims Saddam Has Missiles

MS0507100196 London INDEPENDENT in English 5 Jul 96 p 11

[Report on interview with Wafiq al-Samarra'i, former Chief Iraqi Military Intelligence, by Patrick Cockburn: "Saddam Has Missiles and Will Use Them"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The last time General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, formerly head of Iraqi military intelligence, was in London was in 1987, at the height of the Iran-Iraq war. He came to pay money to an Iranian colonel in return for information about Iran's air force.

He returned last week, 18 months after he escaped from Baghdad. He is one of the highest-ranking officers ever to defect from the Iraqi regime.

"Saddam Husayn thought I was conspiring against him and though he had no firm evidence, his feeling was right," he says.

Interrogated twice, General Samarra'i fled to Kurdistan with his family, bringing to the Western world the first detailed evidence that Iraq had been systematically deceiving the United Nations about its weapons of mass destruction.

His claim that President Saddam had a programme to manufacture anthrax and other biological and chemical weapons was later confirmed by Iraq to UN inspectors.

Sitting in an office overlooking Park Lane, General Samarra'i, a short, thick-set man of 49, told the Independent that he thought Dr Rolf Ekeus, leader of the UN team supervising the destruction of Iraq's weapons, had made a mistake earlier this week in saying that Iraq may still be concealing between six and sixteen long-range missiles.

"I believe Saddam has 40 missiles," he says. "He also has 255 containers of biological agents. In 230, the agent is in powder form, which has no expiry date, and in 25, it is in liquid form, which will deteriorate."

He says he is 100 per cent positive of the information, which came from an informant close to Qusayy, the President's second son who is in overall charge of Iraq's multitude of security agencies.

General Samarra'i believes Iraq also had a hand in the bombing at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, last week in which 19 Americans were killed.

He says that in September 1990, just after the invasion of Kuwait, he was a member of an Iraqi committee in charge of sabotage operations against the allied forces which were massing in Saudi Arabia.

He said that the committee, which was never dissolved, considered bombing the residential buildings of the United States and other foreign military in Saudi Arabia.

The evidence of defectors is always suspect, because of the temptation to exaggerate. In a society as secretive as Iraq, stories are hard to check. But as head of military intelligence, General Samarra'i was in a position to know most of the secrets of the regime and his previous revelations about its biological and missile programmes have been largely confirmed by other sources.

In his account of his years in Iraqi intelligence, the main surprise is that he survived at all.

Born in the city of Samarra'i, 70 miles north of Baghdad, in 1947, he joined the army when he was 18 and military intelligence in 1971. But it was during the Iran-Iraq war that his career prospered.

He says: "We in military intelligence were very capable and we were never taken by surprise in 85 battles."

It is typical of the regime that as he was promoted, he was regarded with increasing suspicion. He says: "The regime did not trust me, because I had extensive contacts with the Kurds. From 1984, I was followed, but they needed me."

General Samarra'i says that he was briefly demoted but brought back after the success of an Iranian surprise attack at Fao in south Iraq in 1986.

The one piece of information he denies having had advance knowledge of was the decision to attack Kuwait in 1990.

In the aftermath of invasion, Saddam Husayn, apparently taken by surprise by the allied reaction, put him in charge of intelligence in Kuwait. But "they felt the way I was reporting things proved that I disapproved [of their policies]."

He was brought into the presidential palace, a move which he says was aimed at reducing his real authority. Believing the President had decided to kill him, he planned his escape to Iraqi Kurdistan.

General Samarra'i does not believe that a military coup in Iraq stands much chance of success. The grip of President Saddam and the intelligence services is too tight.

His own proposal is for the opposition, in association with the Kurds, to start military operations against President Saddam and look for massive defections from the Iraqi army.

In March 1995, he tried to carry out this strategy with some success.

General Samarra'i is not confident that the latest round of in-fighting within Saddam Husayn's family will bring down the regime, nor does he expect the quarrels to stop.

He says that Saddam's son, 'Udayy, does not have any real power and that the family feuds do not necessarily weaken the President's hold on power.

On leaving Kurdistan last year General Samarra'i moved to Damascus, where he is completing a book on his experiences in Iraq.

Of the future he says: "Saddam will definitely take revenge on the people who threatened his leadership."

As for the Scud missiles and the biological weapons: "He wouldn't have got them if he didn't intend to use them."

Iraq: Oppositionist Reports Failed Attempt on Saddam's Life

MM0507105596 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 5 Jul 96 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Iraqi Opposition Talks of Failed Attempt on Saddam Husayn's Life"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — The Iraqi Broadcasting Corporation, run by the opposition [Unified] Iraqi National Congress, quoted Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, former chief of Iraqi military intelligence, yesterday as saying that a failed attempt on Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's life occurred last week.

Al-Samarra'i stressed that he had received "corroborated information from Baghdad" saying that the attempt did take place, "but the Iraqi president was not harmed at all." He added that a number of officers from the General Security Directorate in Baghdad have been arrested in the framework of the investigations into this case. [passage omitted]

Iraq: Public Security, Military Intelligence Chiefs Said Replaced

MM0507102696 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 4 Jul 96 p 4

[Unattributed report: "Reports of Changes in Iraqi Intelligence"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — The Iraqi opposition said yesterday that Iraqi President Saddam Husayn has made changes in the security services command, appointing Major General Taha 'Abbas al-Ahbabi, who was director of military security, as director of public security in place of Sab'awi Ibrahim al-Hasan, President Saddam's half-brother.

The opposition added in a statement yesterday that Mu'tamad Ni'mah al-Tikriti has been apointed as director of military intelligence in place of Khalid al-Juburi.

The opposition attributed these changes to what it termed the existence of problems between the Iraqi President and Sab'awi Ibrahim al-Hasan, who is said to be under house arrest.

Iraq: Police, Security Officers Dismissed in Baghdad, Provinces

NC0407151096 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1400 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] According to security sources in Baghdad, 42 internal security and police officers in Baghdad and the other governorates have been dismissed. [passage indistinct]

No information is available on why Saddam's authorities dismissed such a large number of officers and officials or if they had had any dealings with [Saddam's half brothers] Watban and Sab'awi.

Iraq: Saddam's Half-Brothers Reportedly Under House Arrest

MS0407103896 London THE TIMES in English 4 Jul 96 p 15

[Report by Michael Theodoulou: "Saddam Relatives 'Under House Arrest'"; names as published]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia — Two half-brothers of President Saddam Husayn have been placed under house arrest, Iraqi opposition sources said. The dictator, paranoid and mistrustful after family defections shook his regime last summer, has also banned them from leaving the country.

Watban Ibrahim al-Hasan, a former Interior Minister, and Sabawi Ibrahim al-Hasan, a former security chief, were reportedly ordered to stay at home under tight security after asking to leave Iraq. The two had long been stripped of power.

Western diplomats monitoring Iraq from Jordan said they had heard similar reports of continued feuding within Saddam's regime. He does not even trust his mother. The only people he trusts are his two sons and they have no love for his half-brothers, a European envoy said.

Last August, Watban was shot in the leg by Saddam's eldest son, 'Udday, during a quarrel which also led to the defection of two of Saddam's powerful sons-in-law. Later, the limb was amputated.

The two half-brothers were keen to leave after Saddam ordered the execution in February of his treacherous sons-in-law who had inexplicably returned to Iraq after fleeing to Jordan.

The half-brothers first fell foul of Saddam several years ago when they advised him not to let one of his daughters marry the man who turned out to be the most important defector, General Husayn Kamel al-Hasan. The general was Saddam's former military mastermind who divulged crucial information about Saddam's secret weapons programmes to United Nations inspectors.

In his request to leave Watban said he wanted to go to Jordan for medical care.

Iraq: Opposition Reports New Military Intelligence Head Appointed

JN0307150296 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1215 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iraqi opposition newspaper NIDA' AL-RAFIDAYN revealed that wide-ranging transfers have taken place in the Armed Forces' security organs.

In its latest issue, the paper said that Major General Mu'tamad Ni'mah al-Tikriti was appointed as head of military intelligence after this organ was merged with the Military Security Department.

Commenting on this information, Major General Wafiq al-Samarra'i, former head of the intelligence organization, said that the tyrant [Saddam Husayn] feels isolated now, and cannot find individuals in his family or tribe to occupy sensitive posts.

Al-Samarra'i asserted that the decision to appoint Maj. Gen. Mu'tamad al-Tikriti falls within this framework. Moreover, the decision to separate the military intelligence from the Ministry of Defense confirms that Saddam does not trust the defense minister who is considered a traditional officer and is not a member of the al-Tikriti family.

Al-Samarra'i pointed out that merging military security with the intelligence organ confirms the view that the blockade has undermined the tyrant's security theory due to decreasing financial resources and expenditure.

Iraq: Water Talks With Syria Resume 4 Jul

*JN0407113096 Baghdad INA in Arabic
0930 GMT 4 Jul 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 4 Jul (INA) — The technical committees stemming from the Iraqi-Syrian joint coordination meeting on sharing international waters resumed meetings at the Irrigation Ministry today.

The discussion during the meeting dealt with the studies on the quality of the Euphrates water after the completion of the irrigation projects to be built up the river and the scientific methods to test it. The committees also discussed the venue and date of the next Iraqi-Syrian coordination meeting.

The present coordination meeting began yesterday. 'Abd-al-Sattar Salman Husayn, senior Irrigation Ministry under secretary, headed the Iraqi delegation to the meetings, and Ibrahim Mukhawwal, director general of the Land Reclamation Authority, headed the Syrian side.

Israel: Radio Cites Netanyahu's Remarks on Honoring Oslo Agreements

JN0407151596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1300 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu clearly said for the first time that he will honor the Oslo agreements signed by the PLO and the former Israeli Government. This came during an interview with Netanyahu conducted by the U.S. CNN network last night. Netanyahu's statement was made prior to his visit to Washington and his talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton, whose country is a cosponsor, along with Russia, of the Palestinian-Israeli agreements which were signed in Taba and Cairo and which stemmed from the Oslo agreement.

Israel: Netanyahu News Conference on Peace Talks, Economy, Sharon

TA0307170796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu met yesterday evening, for the first time, with the Foreign Press Association and fielded some tough questions. Here is part of the prime minister's news conference, starting with his answer to a question on how it is possible to continue the peace process on the basis of UN resolutions without giving up land.

[Begin recording] [Netanyahu] First of all, I do not accept the premise. I was in Madrid, and I must tell you that the framework of Madrid did not include the land-for-peace statement; this is not true, absolutely. [UN Resolutions] 242 and 338 were included, but we have our own interpretation of what is land for peace and how much land was given. As you know, Israel so far has given over 90 percent of the land that came under its control in a war of self defense, and the automaticity [as heard] of the assumption that it is land for peace that governs the equation is one that has not been shared by successive Likud governments, merely because our belief is that secure and recognized boundaries is the other complement of 242 and 338. That is conveniently forgotten. Can Israel have secure and recognized boundaries if it cedes 100 percent of the land taken in the Six Day War, and comes back to the pre-1967 boundaries? I believe not. I believe the majority of the Israelis — the vast majority, and by our reckoning, a huge majority of Israelis — share that view. So if the conception is that Israel should go back, that is Israel should give 100 percent and the Arabs should give 0 percent in the equation — and that is what is implicitly or explicitly meant by those who espouse half the formula of 242 — then I can tell you that the vast, the overwhelming majority of the Israeli public does not share that view, and I do not share that view.

Now, what will come out of negotiations, I do not know, but I believe that the aspect of secure and recognized boundaries in the final settlement is essential. Because without secure boundaries there won't be security; and without security, there won't be peace. And therefore, I suggest that we go back to the Madrid framework, which launched the current process. It is a good framework to begin negotiations. I do not expect, I didn't expect in Madrid, that the Arab countries accept our interpretation, and we did not coerce them to do so, and yet we negotiated. Nor can they expect to coerce their interpretation of 242 and 338 on us. We should negotiate and resolve, and attempt to resolve our difference around the negotiating table. Not before we even get to the negotiating table.

[Unidentified correspondent] To follow that up, there has been some suggestion — I think even from Henry Kissinger — that there might be a possibility of a deal in Lebanon in which Israel would try to agree to a withdrawal of troops in exchange for perhaps Syria closing down the bases of Hizballah and other groups in the al-Biqa' valley. Is that a possible scenario for negotiations in the future?

[Netanyahu] We have no territorial claims over Lebanon, as you know. Our concern in Lebanon is one — security. We are in Lebanon, and we will remain in Lebanon as long as we believe that our presence there serves our security purposes. How we can assure our security without being there is something that I cannot answer you for the moment.

[THE NEW YORK TIMES' Joel Greenberg] The secretary general of Hizballah was quoted this week as saying they would not attack the Galilee if Israel left Lebanon. What is your feeling about that, and what do you think is possible to work out on that basis?

[Netanyahu] At the same time I hear statements from Hizballah saying that their purpose is to annihilate the Jewish state, that is they will attack anything and everything, including Israeli and, in fact, Jewish targets abroad. So, there are conflicting reports from Hizballah. Frankly, it is very hard to believe that Israel could base its security on the basis of verbal promises, or even written promises, made by Hizballah. They do not particularly care for the written or the spoken word, and they are perfectly happy to offer, as I said, conflicting versions. So, the question, I think, is not Hizballah per se. Hizballah is the immediate problem we face, but I think the more important question is what are the practical capabilities of Hizballah and how we could ensure that they do not have the capability to attack, and who can ensure it.

[FINNISH PRESS' Sami Kahan] Mr. Prime Minister, you are talking about sweeping liberalization and far-reaching privatization, when there are increasing signs, from countries who have experienced this process, of increasing difficulties and disappointments, for example, also increasing the social gap in the society. Is such a policy not in contradiction to your party's fact that many of your voters are belonging to the more disadvantaged part of the Israeli population?

[Netanyahu] On the contrary. I think that is the.... [pauses] First of all, I do not see a difference between economic and social policies. All economic policy is social policy and all social policy is economic policy. They are really two sides of the same coin and you cannot separate the faces. You cannot say, well, I will cut one face and deal with social policy and let the economy follow suit, or vice versa. In particular, the societies that tried to emphasize only social policy and let the economy follow suit reached bankruptcy. That is the story of the Communist countries. They also reached social bankruptcy, and of the worst order. So, I view all economic policy as intertwined with social consequences. The problem of a concentrated economy, of a dirigiste economy or an etatiste economy, large state intervention in the economy or the existence of large monopolies in the economy, invariably this penalizes the less fortunate members of the society.

I will give you an example, if you have — I'll get into some trouble, alright — a bus cooperative, the largest bus cooperative in the world, in Israel, right, I suggest that you see whether the price of a bus fare in Israel is lower or higher than the places where you have competing bus companies around the world. That would be an instructive thing to look at. You can go across the border, in every area where you supposedly have either a state-controlled or an indirect state franchise to monopolies. You will see that the basic staples of life cost more. Now, since the basic staples of life or the basic services of life are a very high portion of the expenditure of the lower income classes, in fact, by having this concentrated economy or an economy run not along free market lines, you actually penalize the less fortunate members of society.

I intend to change that. I intend to create a lower cost in most areas of life, goods and services, for the population as a whole, and this will first begin and most directly impact the less fortunate. And the same is true for inflation. The higher you are up on the income ladder, the more protection you have against inflation. If you have a policy of government expenditures, this invariably is one of the more important contributors to high inflation. High inflation is a huge tax. The price of bread rises. The lower income classes have a problem feeding it. [sentence as heard] The cost of mortgage is rising and an apartment is getting further and further away from the reach of average Israelis. Therefore, I think that our policy will not only have a built-in social component, there will be a positive social component built into it. And, as I said in the previous question, we intend to make sure in this cycle of budget cuts that, as far as possible, we do not affect the lower income classes.

[National Public Radio's (Mandy Gradstein)] Would you update us on the negotiations with Ari'el Sharon and, as well, are you concerned that if he does join the government he will lobby for certain positions such as an expansion of Jewish settlement and against the withdrawal from Hebron?

[Netanyahu] I am not concerned at all with Mr. Sharon's entering the government, but with what would happen if he does not. I would like him to enter and I am working to that effect, but so far I cannot report to you I am resolved. [sentence as heard] It is never easy forming a coalition and dividing portfolios, but it is a lot harder after you formed a coalition, and we are doing our best, and I am pressing on this matter. I do not have a result yet to report.

[Latin America Service of the BBC's (Hana Beris)] I would like to ask you if you feel now ready to say in an unequivocal way that you are ready, that you accept the idea of meeting Yasir 'Arafat? And, if I may, you said you are examining in detail the situation and the problem of Hebron because of the security, conflicting aspects of it. Do you think you will have made a decision on it before you go to see President Clinton in the United States?

[Netanyahu] Well, I have no news to report to you on either part of your question. First, I have said before and I am saying now that we'll conduct negotiations, or more to the point, we are talking to the Palestinian Authority. We've begun doing that on a variety of levels, precisely as I told you the previous time we met. You know that is a fact in process. I have also said, and I have nothing to add, that if I deem that my own meeting with 'Arafat would be important for the interest of Israel, than I will consider it. As far as the second part of you question, which was, remind me.

[Gradstein] Hebron.

[Netanyahu] Thanks for reminding me. I am studying the problem. [end recording]

Israel: Netanyahu Interviewed on Economy, Terrorism, Peace Talks

MS0507103396 London FINANCIAL TIMES in English 5 Jul 96 p 2

[Report on interview with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu by Julian Ozanne, in Jerusalem on 4 July: "A Desire To Be Different"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mr Binjamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister, has already begun to establish his administration as one founded on domestic and economic reform rather than Middle East peace-making. Since moving into office just over two weeks ago, he has pushed ahead with far-reaching economic reforms and a shake-up of the domestic decision-making process at the heart of government.

While the peace process seems dangerously stalled since his electoral victory in May, he has held a string of cabinet meetings devoted solely to the economy, persuaded his government to approve a large package of expenditure cuts and taken new powers into his hands over policymaking. Yesterday he was up until dawn haggling over the future of Mr Ari'el Sharon, the hawkish former general who is seeking to strengthen his cabinet role in charge of infrastructure.

But in an interview yesterday in his Jerusalem office he appeared remarkably calm and relaxed. Ahead of his visit to the U.S. next week, he was eager to articulate his glowing vision of Israel's economic future and the radical transformation he wants to bring about in a country still dominated by big government and bureaucracy.

"This is the first time in the history of Israel there is a coherent economic leadership at the head of the country, where the prime minister, finance minister and governor of the central bank all share a common vision to liberalise the Israeli economy and move forward into the next century as one of the great technological and entrepreneurial successes in the world."

According to Mr Netanyahu, Israel had never had a leader who dealt first and foremost with economic policy, as in other western nations. Traditionally the agenda had been dominated by security and foreign affairs. This resulted in a "vacuum, in which the decisions on the economy and social policy were either relegated elsewhere or simply neglected by default".

But Israel, with a per capita income of $16,000 a year, is now a different country and Mr Netanyahu, at 46 Israel's youngest and most inexperienced premier, is determined to be a different prime minister or, "chief executive" as he prefers to describe his job.

"Israel is going to be a different country. It is going to be run differently and it is going to be different in terms of the expansion of market opportunities and services and the general level of Israeli life.

"I would like to see Israel moving very rapidly from its position as a dependent nation to economic independence and to become a significantly cant economic power in the world by its own right and not only in per capita terms.

"I think that is perfectly possible. We are probably the only advanced economy in the world that can move into the post-industrial information age without having really gone through the phase of being an industrial power. And that paradoxically is not a disadvantage. It's a huge advantage because we do not carry the baggage of obsolescent industries.

"The curse of not having capitalism turns out to be a blessing in this case because the transition is much quicker and less painful. We have a highly technological and educated population that, with the right structural reforms in the economy, could move very quickly and seize the economic opportunities as no other society can."

Mr Netanyahu is determined to be seen by future generations as the prime minister who finally swept away regulation, control and state ownership. During his first 16 days as prime minister, he has been obsessed with bringing Israel into a new millennium as an economic power to be reckoned with.

He has held round after round of meetings on the economy and persuaded a reluctant cabinet to approve a budget deficit reduction programme for the future, including an expenditure cut of Shk4.9bn (1bn pounds) from the 1997 budget. He delayed next week's trip to the U.S., due last month, to complete the economic package and line up a series of meetings on Wall Street.

His attempt to put Mr Jacob Frenkel, central bank governor, into the Treasury failed in the face of political opposition from members of Mr Netanyahu's Likud party who wanted to see one of their number in the post. But he has reappointed the tough inflation fighter and former Chicago university economics professor as central bank governor with an enhanced role as head of an advisory committee on economic policy.

Furthermore, he says the new system for directly electing the prime minister, which brought him to power in the May elections, will play a vital role in further liberalising the economy. "I didn't advance this idea... in order to have a strong and centralised chief executive office. I believe that we need an added political power in order to distribute economic assets from the government to the marketplace. It is impossible to do it otherwise.

When I moved the privatisation authority to the prime minister's office, it was not to pack my so-called cronies in jobs as directors of government companies. It is precisely the opposite, to rid the government of these companies and sell them to the public."

Many Israeli political commentators believe Mr Netanyahu hopes to secure a second term after elections in 2000 by focusing on the economy at the expense of the peace process. They say radical economic and social reforms combined with low inflation will produce such a powerful feelgood factor that the peace process would become marginal to the election outcome. In this analysis Mr Netanyahu will continue to bang the drum of security while sticking to campaign policies which would stall the peace process.

It is a suggestion that Mr Netanyahu rejects. "I wasn't elected to achieve a stalemate. I was elected to achieve peace in a way the majority of the Israeli public understands — a genuine peace. I do not intend to freeze or stop negotiations but on the contrary pursue them on broad fronts perhaps in some new areas... But when it comes to the question that determines the survival and future of the state of Israel I will negotiate prudently and responsibly."

At the moment this seems to mean saying or doing little. While he has held repeated meetings on the economy in the past 16 days, the new prime minister has not yet devoted a meeting to the peace process. He maintains the right of Jewish settlers to develop their communities on occupied Arab land.

He refuses to change his preelectoral position that he will meet Mr Yasir 'Arafat, president of the Palestinian Authority and Israel's most important peace partner, only if the security of the state of Israel demands it. He stands firmly against the establishment of a Palestinian state, the right of return of refugees and concessions on Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem.

Nor has he made any real effort to calm the fears of Israel's increasingly alarmed Arab neighbours by spelling out any concrete steps or new ideas to save the fragile process from stagnation or collapse. His only really new initiative seems to be to insist that progress in the peace negotiations, both with Palestinians and with Syria, depends on the cessation of Islamist guerrilla attacks — by the Palestinian Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] group and the pro-Iranian Hizbollah in southern Lebanon.

He tantalisingly holds out the prospect of big "surprises" and "breakthroughs" in future peace negotiations. However, he does not offer any indication of how they might come about with the Arab world gearing up for four years of hostility and possible conflict.

What is clear is that for now he is concentrating on making his mark, quickly and decisively, on domestic policy. He is also still relishing, with the arrogance for which he is notorious, an electoral victory which upset Israel's conventional political wisdom.

"I don't remember a single government that has acted so decisively, so clearly. Obviously there have been snags, and the press seizes on snags. But I find myself in a peculiar situation throughout my career, that people do not see the big moves I make until I make them.

"I've had the great fortune of being the recipient of the greatest favour a politician can have, and that is systematic underestimation by one's opponents. Some of it lingers on and it doesn't bother me that it should linger on further as long as we get things done."

Israel: Embassy Cable Readies Netanyahu for Talks With Clinton

TA0407093096 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 4 Jul 96 p 6

[Report by political correspondent Shim'on Schiffer]

[FBIS Translated Text] "Conditions are still not ripe for reaching decisions on the Hebron and Orient House issues." This was the assessment voiced by sources very close to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu yesterday as the prime minister was preparing for his trip to Washington.

Nevertheless, the sources said that Netanyahu will promise President Clinton that the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will carry out its redeployment in Hebron, "as soon as the government makes certain modifications in the agreement on the city with the Palestinians."

Tomorrow, Netanyahu will consult with the ministers handling the two most urgent political issues on his agenda. The prime minister will present Clinton with the position formulated in the course of these meetings.

The sources stressed that contrary to reports, the Americans are not pressuring Netanyahu to come to Washington with detailed decisions.

Yesterday, Netanyahu, Foreign Minister David Levi, and Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay received a highly classified document from the Israeli Embassy in Washington, specifying the issues that will come up at Tuesday's [9 July] meeting between Clinton and Netanyahu at the White House. The document is based on a conversation between Jeremy Yisakharov, political adviser at the Israeli Embassy, and Mark Parris, the president's adviser on Middle East affairs at the National Security Council. Among other things, the document states that Clinton's main goal is "to establish a personal rapport with Netanyahu." At their meeting, Clinton intends to assume a "listening posture" and hear the Israeli prime minister's ideas.

The U.S. Administration realizes that the Hebron issue is very complicated. The document states: "We understand the problem, and have no intention of rushing Netanyahu on this matter." Nevertheless, the White House expects the Netanyahu government "not to push 'Arafat into a corner" and to help him out by making a series of public gestures that will demonstrate the Israeli Government's readiness to accept the Palestinian Authority [PA] chairman as a partner. The administration takes a favorable view of the fact that Netanyahu's political adviser Dore Gold met with 'Arafat and clarified that the negotiations with the PA will continue.

The document states that Secretary of State Warren Christopher described his meetings in Israel with Netanyahu to President Clinton as "good."

As for Syria, the report notes that Clinton is keenly aware of the changes in the Israeli attitude toward Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. The document nevertheless asserts that it is impossible to turn the clock back to the situation that existed four years ago. The White House is urging Netanyahu to present new ideas on the Syrian track, and in the closed meeting with President Clinton, the Israeli side will also be asked to present its position on Lebanon.

The White House is proposing that the regional threat posed by Iran, the issue of international terrorism, and the nature of Turkish-Israeli relations be discussed within the framework of the wider talks with the Israeli delegation. Another issue that will be discussed at the meeting is the knotty state of relations between Israel and Egypt, which is cause for special concern in the U.S. capital.

Meanwhile, in Washington, the preparations for Netanyahu's visit are continuing. The White House is not blind to the plans of numerous Republican congressmen to "adopt" Netanyahu and present him as their ally. Sources close to President Clinton hope that Netanyahu will refrain from taking sides with regard to the presidential candidates.

[Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew on 4 July in a page A1 report by Aluf Ben reports that "on the eve of Prime Minister Netanyahu's trip to the United States, political sources yesterday said that President Clinton intends to assign clear priority to promoting the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians when the two men meet next week in Washington. The sources asserted that the Syrian track would be granted lower priority.

"Clinton will emphasize to Netanyahu the importance he sees in upholding the Oslo agreements and expanding the contacts with the PA and Chairman Yasir 'Arafat. Clinton will ask the prime minister to state his political viewpoints and explain how he intends to promote the peace process on all the negotiating tracks." HA'ARETZ adds that "during his trip to Washington, Netanyahu intends to expound on his plans for economic reform. Prior to the elections, he promised to initiate a reduction in U.S. civilian aid to Israel and he is expected to be asked about this by Congress. In a closed meeting several days ago, Finance Minister Dan Meridor said that "it is too early to speak about a cut in aid."

Israel: Clinton To Receive 'Detailed Plans' on Palestinian Track

TA0407180696 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 4 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] In his upcoming meeting with President Clinton, Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu will provide detailed plans on the future negotiations with the Palestinians, a senior political source said tonight. Netanyahu will tell Clinton that the Hebron redeployment will be carried out along with improvements in the security sphere, the guarantee of the prerogative to undertake hot pursuit, the fleshing out of the Jewish settlement, and the assurance of territorial contiguity for Qiryat Arba'. The closure on the West Bank and Gaza Strip will be eased, frameworks and teams for permanent status negotiations will be set up, and high-level meetings on economic issues will be held.

The inner cabinet on political and security affairs will convene in its expanded format for the first time tomorrow. Before it does, however, Netanyahu will inform the government of the inclusion of Ministers Hammer, Eytan, Qatzav, and Begin in the inner cabinet as observers for the time being.

Israel: Netanyahu May Visit Morocco on Return From Washington

TA0507104296 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 5 Jul 96 p 2

[Report by Ben Kaspit]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] On his way back to Israel from Washington Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu may pay a lightning-quick visit to Morocco and meet with King Hassan. Political sources in Jerusalem confirmed to MA'ARIV yesterday that the possibility exists although it has not been finalized yet.

In Jerusalem, it was very difficult to decide where a visit should be paid first: Egypt, Jordan, or Morocco. Numerous European countries, too, "bombarded" Netanyahu with invitations for official visits. Sensitivity was especially high with regard to the Arab countries, but last week the Jordanians solved the problem when they hinted to the prime minister's bureau that they were not interested in being the first country on Netanyahu's visits agenda, for fear of harsh criticism in the Arab world and domestic problems.

Netanyahu and his advisers attribute great importance to a visit to Egypt, and the tendency then was not to pay a lightning-quick visit to this country on the way back from Washington. "This is a serious, difficult visit, with work teams and long deliberations," a Jerusalem source told MA'ARIV. "It is most likely that Netanyahu will leave for Jordan during the week after his return from Washington. [no end quotation marks as published]

A visit to Morocco seems ideal then. No final answer has been given by Rabat yet, but it seems that the Moroccan king wants to establish contacts with the new Israeli Government and try to pressure Netanyahu into abiding by Peres and Rabin's peace course. [passage omitted]

Israel: Sharon 'Pleased' With Agreement on Infrastructure Ministry

TA0407054396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The all-night meeting at the Prime Minister's Office has ended with an agreement on the establishment of the Ministry for National Infrastructure. Knesset Member Ari'el Sharon is due to become minister on Monday [8 July]. Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu is to bring the agreement for setting up the new ministry before the cabinet at its weekly session tomorrow and then before the Knesset on Monday. Last night's meeting lasted over five hours.

The new ministry will include the Energy Ministry, the Lands Administration, the Water Commission, the National Sewage Authority, the bypass roads in Judaea and Samaria, natural resources, the Negev and Galilee development authorities, and the Rural Development Authority.

The National Religious Party [NRP] and Agudat Yisra'el have to approve the concessions their parties will have to make.

In another coalition matter, the disagreement between SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] and the NRP over the Religious Affairs portfolio was not discussed at last night's meeting and no compromise on the issue has yet been reached.

[A similar report on Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0500 GMT on 4 July adds that "Ari'el Sharon is pleased with the composition of the Infrastructure Ministry and will join the cabinet after the ministry's establishment is approved. Sharon said that it appears that the nascent ministry will be capable of handling most of Israel's national requirements on the eve of the 21st century." The report notes that "NRP Minister Yitzhaq Levi said that he was prepared to give up the Energy Ministry in its entirety. The NRP is meeting today to approve handing over the Energy Ministry to Sharon." Qol Yisra'el reports that "Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said he was convinced that Ari'el Sharon would contribute to government activity in all fields, including the political and security spheres."]

Israel: Cabinet Decision on Sharon Postponed Until 7 Jul

TA0507093996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The cabinet was not asked today to approve the establishment of an infrastructures ministry, nor was it asked to endorse Ari'el Sharon's inclusion in the government. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that toward the end of the meeting the prime minister briefly announced that the issue would be brought to the cabinet on Sunday [7 July], during the special session convened to discuss budget cuts. Our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel reports that the infrastructures ministry issue was not raised at the cabinet meeting because the dispute with the United Torah Jewry [UTJ] has not been settled yet. Yesterday, the UTJ faction announced it would be prepared to discuss the issue if the Likud accords it a foothold in the Religious Affairs Ministry. The Likud says that an effort will be made to settle the disagreements by Sunday, so that the new ministry will be established with the approval of all coalition components.

At the cabinet meeting the prime minister incorporated three ministers in the inner cabinet: Refa'el Eytan, Zvulun Hammer, and Moshe Qatzav. Minister Beni Begin has an observer position until Basic Law; the Government is amended.

Israel: State Rejects Labor Party's Election Fraud Allegations

TA0307172796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The State Attorney's Office has rejected the Labor Party's appeal against the election results. In her reply to the Jerusalem District Court, Tamar Edri, the director of the Central Elections Committee, refutes all the allegations made by the Labor Party with regard to fraud and irregularities at the ballots. This was reported by our correspondent Esti Perez.

Israel: Court Rejects Labor Petition Against Election Results

TA0407151496 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1445 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Jerusalem District Court has just rejected the appeal filed by Labor Knesset Member Ra'anan Kohen against the election results. Justices Zeiler, Brenner, and Heshin stated that the appellant did not thoroughly examine the initial findings he presented to the court which allegedly attest to fraud. Our correspondent Efi Trigger has the details:

[Trigger] The Jerusalem District Court was supposed to rule on Ra'anan Kohen's request to add new evidence to that already presented in his appeal. Labor recently examined 1,600 ballots and claimed that the new evidence attests to the fact that there was an attempt to tamper with the election results. The Likud and the Central Elections Committee, on the other hand, claimed that the initial findings of the examination of 60 ballots, which were presented to the court approximately two weeks ago, were mistaken and constitute nothing more than human error within the normal margin of error — meaning: There is insufficient evidence to warrant canceling the election results.

Justices Zeiler, Brenner, and Heshin discussed the appeal for five hours. In fact, they discussed Kohen's request. Several minutes ago, they made their very surprising decision: They decided to accept the Likud claim that Labor's initial charges were based on error, and they rejected the entire appeal.

At the same time, the judges stipulated that they acknowledge the fact that the deadline for filing an appeal against election results — 14 days after the official results are published — made it difficult to examine the facts. It is only because of this, they stressed, that we have no complaints about the petition on this issue. The judges did not criticize Kohen for not conducting a thorough examination of the evidence, but they rejected his appeal. This is the end of the story, unless Labor decides to appeal to the High Court of Justice, and we know of no such intention.

Israel: IDF Lifts Curfew on West Bank Village

TA0507063196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] this morning lifted the curfew imposed on the village of Sammu' in the Hebron hills area. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the curfew was imposed two weeks ago, after villagers damaged Jewish National Fund equipment being used to pave a bypass road in the area. Twenty-five Sammu' residents were detained and handed over to the police for questioning.

Israel: Salamah Confesses Iranian Involvement in Suicide Bombings

TA0407120196 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 4 Jul 96 p 14

[Report by Mikhal Goldberg]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Shin Bet has scored a tremendous achievement. Hasan Salamah, the notorious terrorist suspected of planning the bombing attacks on the No. 18 buses in Jerusalem and the explosion at Ashqelon junction, has recently admitted that he was trained in Iran to carry out terrorist attacks in Israel.

Salamah, who was high on Israel's most wanted list, was arrested two months ago on suspicion of recruiting the suicide bombers who carried out the attacks on the buses in Jerusalem and at the Ashqelon junction in February and March 1996 and of supplying them with explosives.

In the course of his investigation, Salamah claimed that he trained in Syria. YEDI'OT AHARONOT has learned, however, that he recently broke down and confessed to being trained in Iran.

It was also learned that Salamah disclosed, among other things, that before the series of deadly terrorists attacks he had spent several months in various Arab states, including Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Syria; it was in Iran, however, that he received all his training preparatory to carrying out the attacks.

The Shin Bet sees this confession as further proof of the Israeli and U.S. claims that Iran is behind terrorist activity and with this end in mind trains terrorists to operate as handlers or kamikazes.

To the best of our knowledge, as soon as Salamah confessed to Iran's involvement in the terrorist attacks, the information was relayed to the relevant U.S. authorities.

On the other hand, the Shin Bet has been unsuccessful in extracting a similar confession from Husayn Muhammad Maqdad, who was wounded three months ago in a "work accident" at an East Jerusalem hotel while attempting to prepare an explosive charge. [passage omitted]

Jordan: King, UK's Rifkind Say Peace Process Should Continue

JN0307162596 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn received British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind at the Royal Palace in al-'Aqabah at noon today. Talks dealt with the peace process and its latest developments.

The two sides emphasized that the peace process should continue until a comprehensive and just peace is realized. Talks also dealt with bilateral relations and ways of strengthening and developing them, in addition to a number of regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The meeting was attended by His Highness Talal Bin-Muhammad, military secretary of his majesty the king; Khalid al-Madadihah, minister of state for foreign affairs; the British ambassador in Amman; and a number of the British delegation members.

The British foreign secretary held a news conference in al-'Aqabah today in which he said the meeting with His Majesty King Husayn dealt with viewpoints on recent developments in the region, the peace process, and bilateral friendly relations.

He said the meeting with his majesty aimed to benefit from his majesty's counsels, experience, and wisdom concerning many international issues. He expressed admiration for his majesty's wisdom and his eagerness to realize comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

He said the talks dealt with international terrorism and how it can be combated by the international community. Talks also dealt with Iraq, especially concerning UN Resolution 986 on the oil-for-food deal, and how far Iraq is committed to the implementation of UN resolutions.

The British foreign secretary said he briefed King Husayn on the results of the industrialized nations summit. He said Britain welcomes the results of the Cairo summit, and emphasized that the Middle East process should continue.

Jordan: UK's Rifkind Interviewed on Mideast Tour

JN0407095696 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 1900 GMT 3 Jul 96

[Interview with British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind by Dima Hamarinah in Amman on 3 July; from "The News at Ten" — recorded]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Rifkind] Yes, it was a very valuable opportunity to hear from his majesty, his thinking on the Middle East peace process and on the success of the Cairo summit, and we believe that Jordan made an important contribution to the success of that occasion. And of course His Majesty has been a pivotal figure in many of the remarkable achievements of the peace process so far.

[Hamarinah] You just arrived from Saudi Arabia today, and so were your talks here pre-scheduled in al-'Aqabah as well as Saudi Arabia, or did they happen in light of the recent bombing?

[Rifkind] No, they were pre-scheduled, and we have of course a continuing, very good, warm dialogue with Jordan. I welcome the opportunity to hear from His Majesty the king and to explain the British position with regard to the peace process. I think we have a very similar view, and of course these were matters that were discussed by Britain along with other countries, at the G-7 summit in Lyons last weekend and at the European Union summit in Florence a week before. There is a lot of common ground to cover.

[Hamarinah] How about your visit to Saudi Arabia? Was that pre-scheduled?

[Rifkind] Yes, again it is regular contacts that we have with Saudi Arabia. I have been there four, five times over the past three, four years, and an opportunity to see His Majesty king Fahd, Crown Prince 'Abdallah, and other senior Saudi figures.

[Hamarinah] At the G-7 summit, security seemed to top the agenda at the G-7. Do you believe that currently the equation has shifted from Arabs calling for land-for-peace while Israelis are calling for security-for-peace?

[Rifkind] I believe that there should be no necessary contradiction between these two requirements. Of course, land-for-peace is a very important principle. It is one that should be sustained because I believe that is what has (?underlined) the peace process so far. I think that security, which is a legitimate objective both for Israel and for other countries can best be achieved by an overall peace settlement, and it is not possible to contemplate that overall peace settlement that does not involve land as well as peace issues being discussed.

[Hamarinah] But it seems that security has become a prerequisite now.

[Rifkind] Well, it is a question of the chicken and the egg, which comes first, and the reality is that of course until you have peace, you have no total security. But you do not have total security unless it is against the background of normal peace relations between the countries concerned. So these matters have to be looked at in a very comprehensive way.

[Hamarinah] You have been quoted as saying, do not judge Mr. Netanyahu and the news Israeli Government until it is clear what their positions are. But what do you think about comments that he made yesterday concerning not wanting to divide Palestinians and Israelis, as well as comments that came from top military officials who said the closure should end?

[Rifkind] There have been a number of comments made, and one has to look at them in their totality. I believe that since he became prime minister, Minister Netanyahu appears to have been very cautious in some of his judgments. We have seen a willingness to enter into dialogue with the Palestine Authority, which did not previous exist between the Likud politicians and the Palestinians. That is a very welcome development. Mr. Netanyahu has also said that his government will honor the international agreements that the previous Israeli Government entered into. That too is very, very welcome.

There are a number of other areas of policy that do require further clarification, and therefore it is wise to wait till we have a clear judgment as to what the policy and priorities will be.

[Hamarinah] Do you think that Mr. Netanyahu will make his position clear following his meeting with President Clinton in Washington?

[Rifkind] I have no doubt that this will be a viable opportunity to clarify some of these matters. The others may take a little longer. I do not know. The quicker the better. But on the other hand, we realize that these are crucial issues; and, inevitably, prime ministers in office have to be much more careful and cautious than leaders of the opposition. That is true in all countries, and therefore I think we should understand that when it comes to the Israelis. And it is in everyone's interest not to rush to judgments because these are crucial issues that are being addressed.

[Hamarinah] Some Arab countries have voiced their fears away [as heard] that the U.S. is not playing a moderate role any more; it is not being an objective mediator. Does Britain or Europe view that or agree with that in any way, considering that there have been a lot of European contacts with Arab leaders over the past few weeks?

[Rifkind] We recognize the historical reality that the United States have had a very close relationship over the years. That is not a new phenomenon, but I believe that there is a common international interest in the peace process succeeding and in the remarkable achievements of the last two or three years not being undermined and not being reversed. So far as the European countries are concerned, the United Kingdom was one of the countries that took the lead in the communique at the Florence summit emphasizing the need for the peace process to continue, emphasizing that land-for-peace was not an unreasonable proposition and something which has been an important part of the equation up till now and ought to continue being so in our view, and at the same time emphasizing that the new Israeli Government must be given some time to clarify its position in order that its contribution to these complex matter should be as constructive as possible.

[Hamarinah] Does Europe see itself as playing a more active role in the peace process?

[Rifkind] Well, Europe, of course, consists of individual countries. Europe does not yet have a single foreign policy, although there are many issues on which we have common interests. Certainly the United Kingdom, which has very strong links with all the countries of the region—with Jordan, with Israel, with Saudi Arabia, with other countries, in Egypt in particular—of course we will want to make an important contribution and to do so in the interest of peace, in the interest of stability, and of a just outcome to the negotiations.

[Hamarinah] And before coming here you were interviewed and you said you might be discussing development issues in Jordan. Could you elaborate on that?

[Rifkind] Yes. I mean one of the important initiatives at the moment will be the follow-up from the Barcelona summit last year and the United Kingdom is to host a conference in London early next year on encouraging investment, new economic investment in the countries of the region; and we are doing a number of pilot studies at the moment and I am pleased that Jordan is one of the four countries that has been the subject of very intense pilot studies as to how we can maximize new economic investment in countries like Jordan which will make an important contribution to prosperity and to employment.

[Hamarinah] One final question. The United States has publicly said that it is not in favor of Mr. Butrus-Ghali running for the post of secretary general again. Does Britain or Europe have a position on that?

[Rifkind] Well, the question about a successor to the present secretary general, whether he should have another term or not, these are very sensitive issues and we believe that these matters are not best dealt with by public statements and by public declarations. It requires quiet, private diplomacy, and I am sure will we get an outcome which will serve the interest of the United Nations. We believe that that kind of traditional diplomatic approach is more likely to produce a sensible and satisfactory outcome.

[Hamarinah] Thank you very much.

[Rifkind] Thank you.

Jordan: Further on UK's Rifkind Remarks After Meeting King Husayn

JN0307203996 Amman Jordan Television Network in English 1900 GMT 3 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report over video; from the "News at Ten" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His majesty the king held talks with British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind on how to keep the Middle East peace process going after the election of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

The talks at the Royal Palace in al-'Aqabah also dealt with Jordanian-British ties in addition to other regional and international issues.

Rifkind told reporters after the meeting that the king's influence on the Middle East peace process is truly historic. He said that they discussed terrorism and the last call weekend by the by G-7 group of industrialized nations for stronger action [sentence as heard]. Rifkind said they had identical views on the need for Iraq to meet in full the conditions for the United Nations oil-for-food accord.

[Begin Rifkind recording] We have a very great admiration for the work of His Majesty King Husayn. We believe that the contribution that he has made and continues to make to the Middle East peace process is truly historic. And I believe that at this moment in time it is ...[pauses] we all benefit from his very wise advice and massive experience with regard to these matters. We welcomed the outcome of the summit in Cairo, and I believe that Jordan made an important contribution that ensured the success of that summit, and we share with his majesty the king the need to encourage the continuation of the peace process, to wait with great interest and care the clear declaration of the policy that the new Israeli Government intend to pursue, that we will have to need further clarification of, but this is a very important time when we all have to make our maximum contribution towards ensuring the continuation of the peace process, building on what has already been achieved, ensuring that many of these achievements are not reversed, and exploring the opportunities for further progress. I believe that it is indeed necessary to have much more effective international cooperation to deal with terrorism because terrorism is an international crime, and therefore must be responded to by more effective international action. The G-7 countries at their summit in Lyon last weekend called for a conference which is due to be held in July of interior ministers and foreign ministers to explore new ways of cooperation and more effective action.

So far as Iraq is concerned, the two aspects to the discussion: One was the importance of the 986 Resolution. And there is, I believe, an identity of view that humanitarian help to the people of Iraq is of course desirable, but we must ensure that the implementation of this resolution is not abused by the Iraqi regime, that there is no diversion of resources for improper purposes. [end recording]

Jordan: 3 Palestinian Women Said Arrested on Charges of Hamas Membership

JN0507150996 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1330 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Committee for the Defense of Human Rights [not further identified] said that on Sunday [30 June] the Jordanian Intelligence arrested three Palestinian female students in Jordan on charges of belonging to the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. In a statement, the committee said the intelligence department prevented the students' lawyer from visiting them and declined to reveal their whereabouts.

However, sources at the Jordanian Prisons Department leaked information that the detained students were brutally tortured and interrogated to force them to make confessions. The committee called for the immediate release of the three detainees, saying that if they remain under arrest, they will lose a full academic year as they are supposed to sit examinations next week.

Jordan: Al-Kabariti Says Bread Subsidy for Citizens To Remain

JN0307193196 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 3 Jul 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said the bread subsidy for citizens will not be lifted.

At a meeting with journalists today, the prime minister said studies are under way to reduce the budget deficit. This includes a study on lifting the bread subsidy for foreign residents and tourists, and ways to prevent smugglers from smuggling flour and livestock owners from buying bread to feed their animals, he said.

He emphasized that all strata of citizens, except those mentioned, will not be affected in any way by the lifting of the bread subsidy.

Jordan: Popular Sectors Protest Plans To Reduce Bread Subsidies

JN0507062696 Amman THE STAR in English 4-10 Jul 96 p 1

[Report by Raed Al Abed]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The latest government plan to increase bread prices by 300 percent has put Jordanians on red alert. Political parties, trade unions, professional associations, the Jordanian Women's Union and other popular institutions united to protest government intentions under the banner of "bread prices is a red line — do not over step it." This is seen as a clear and forceful message to the government.

The National Society for Consumer Protection (NSCP) also opposed the government's plans, and warned of their negative consequences if they were implemented. If the government goes ahead with its intention to decrease or do away with subsidies altogether, it risks facing an angry public backlash over an issue that was always left untouched by previous governments.

Early this week Minister of Supply Munir Subar told AL-DUSTUR Arabic daily of the government's intention to increase the price of bread from 85 fils to 250 fils per kilogram as of 15 July. But the minister later backed down and said the government was only studying the matter. Mr. Subar told PETRA news agency that "the decision to increase bread prices is the prerogative of the prime minister, and no decision has been taken." AL-DUSTUR in turn insisted that it had quoted the minister correctly. Official sources said the Ministry of Supply was forced to retract Mr. Subar's statement under pressure from Prime Minister 'Abd al-Karim al-Kabariti, who is worried about public reaction.

But officials say that the government is under pressure to increase bread prices since wheat prices in world markets shot up from $175 to 270 per ton. Government subsidies of wheat is estimated at JD 200 per ton. One kilogram of bread costs the Ministry of Supply about 250 fils. Ministry officials maintain that the government will pay the low income JD 15 a year in supply coupons so that they will not suffer as a result of the price hike. "The needy will not feel the increase of bread prices," Sober said.

The minister explained that "there is 35 to 40 percent of wheat lost by illegal ways or waste." The Ministry of Supply imports 680,000 tons of wheat annually and it subsidized bread prices to the tune of JD 106 million. But ministry officials maintain that there is also about 280,000 tons of wheat annually that is wasted.

The NSCP strongly rejects the government's intentions. "This increase will negatively affect the nourishment of the people and widen the circle of poverty as 90 percent of people are living in economic crises," said Dr Mohammad Obiedat, the director of the NSCP. "I urge the government to study all the alternatives. The excuses that are presented by the government are incorrect."

Those alternatives, Mr. Obiedat explained, including putting a stop to the smuggling of wheat outside Jordan, and impose more taxes on cigarettes and alcohol. He said the government should raise the exit tax fee on visitors, and collect immigration fees from the more than 150,000 Arab workers who violate their residence permits.

One of the NSCP's latest studies shows that grain prices are decreasing and not increasing as the government claims." Dr. Obiedat explained. A recent study by the NSCP states that 70 percent of families of seven members and more consume about 2.5 kilograms of bread daily. This would cost an extra JD 77.56 annually, if the price is increased to 250 fils. These families would have to pay JD 228 annually. The study shows that the waste of wheat is only 14.2 percent.

Economic experts believe that the government is not strong enough to cope with additional burdens. Like absorbing the increase in international wheat prices. Farmers in Jordan only produce five percent of local market needs. Economists blame successive government policies for this state of affairs.

While the government denies any relation between the IMF-imposed conditions and the planned floating of bread prices, some experts believe the opposite to be true. The IMF reform program which ends in July 1997 calls for the implementation of three issues: Gradual lifting of subsidies on all goods and eventual removal of all subsidy. Also, the program aims at decreasing the exchange rate of the dinar by 30 percent to make it in parity with the dollar. The third measure is the exemption of foreign goods from customs taxes replacing them with tariffs.

The consumer society has long been urging the government to revive the 'Anti-Trust Laws' and float prices of commodities. The NSCP believes that these regulations will serve the interest of the consumer. Together with the NSCP, the political and social institutions demand a national dialogue to discuss the reorganization of the subsidy and those who deserve it.

The executive committee of the Jordanian Women's Union held an emergency meeting to discuss such government plans. In a statement the union, rejects such increases arguing that it will deteriorate the economic situation of the country, and strain the social fabric. The union urged the government to create a balance between the level of income and the cost of living, by increasing the incomes of people, "to enforce a minimum wage and expand social insurance, and improve public services," the statement said.

The coupons issue has many social connotations. The NSCP says it is degrading for citizens to queue at the Ministry of Supply and ask for something that is essential for their daily subsistence. "The policy of the distribution of coupons has many negative social aspects," Obiedat said. "If this mechanism is implemented on bread, which is holy, it would be an insult to the people."

Lebanon: Al-Hariri Leaves on Short Visit to Paris

NC0407085196 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic
0815 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri left Beirut today for Paris on a short visit during which he will meet French President Jacques Chirac to discuss the Middle East and the resolutions passed by the summit of the seven industrial states and by the Arab summit in Cairo.

Lebanon: Explosion at Israeli Post; Israeli Mock Raids in South

NC0307161896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic
1530 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A powerful explosion was heard in the occupied area of Hasbayya before noon today. It originated from the artillery emplacement of the Israeli enemy forces in Wadi Abu Qamhah, above which columns of black smoke rose. Immediately afterward, the occupation forces and Lahd's militia [South Lebanese Army] imposed a security cordon around the post.

Earlier, enemy military aircraft flew over the area and conducted several mock raids over the city of Tyre and Western al-Biqa'.

Lebanon: Israeli Forces Kidnap 2 Fishermen; Overflights Reported

NC0507084096 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic
0800 GMT 5 July 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli occupation forces kidnapped two fishermen yesterday evening. They are Muhammad Hasan Jabir and his son Hasan Jabir. They were kidnapped near Buyut al-Sayyid farm close to al-Hamra' roadblock in the district of Tyre. The Israeli forces led them to inside the border strip. Meanwhile, Israeli warplanes carried out reconnaissance flights over the western sector's villages.

Lebanon: Hizballah Claims To Abide by Agreement With Israel

NC0407191696 Paris AFP in English
1834 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, July 4 (AFP) — The Iranian-backed Hizballah said Thursday [4 July] it would abide by the ceasefire agreement reached in April despite what it said were repeated Israeli violations.

The Moslem fundamentalist group's deputy secretary general, Shaykh Na'im Qasim, said his organization "considers itself still linked to the April arrangement, despite repeated violations by Israel."

Qasim also said in a statement to the Lebanese news agency AL-MARKAZIYAH that Hizballah had "informed the Lebanese government of the violations and has asked it to take the necessary steps."

Under the U.S.-brokered deal reached on April 26 after Israel's Operation Grapes of Wrath, Hizballah and Israel pledged not to target civilians on either side of the border.

But the agreement does not rule out Hizballah attacks against the Israeli-occupied "security zone" in south Lebanon or Israeli retaliation.

Qasim also reiterated "the right and duty of Hizballah to make suicide attacks against Israel occupation forces because these types of attacks have proven very effective."

The truce called for the setting up of a ceasefire monitoring committee made up of representatives from France, the United States, Syria, Israel and Lebanon.

But several rounds of talks in Washington involving the five countries have failed to set up the monitoring committee.

Lebanon: Beirut, Tehran Stress Expansion of Ties

LD0407085096 Tehran IRNA in English
0554 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, July 4, IRNA — Iran's Ambassador to Lebanon Homayun 'Alizadeh emphasized the need for full cooperation between Tehran and Beirut.

In a press conference after meeting the Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz on Tuesday [2 July], the Iranian diplomat rejected rumors that the Iranian consulate in Beirut had refused to grant visa to Lebanese businessmen to travel to Iran.

Terming the rumors as baseless, 'Alizadeh added that Iran favors effective cooperation between the two countries in all fields.

As for hurdles on the way of granting visas and consular services to Iranians wishing to travel to Lebanon, he said the matter was discussed in his meeting with the Lebanese foreign minister.

The Iranian diplomat quoted Buwayz as saying that Iran is a friend of Lebanon and Beirut is for constructive cooperation with the Iranian Government.

The Lebanese foreign minister also said that the necessary measures have been taken to solve any problem which may arise at the Lebanese Embassy in Tehran, said the ambassador.

Syria: Al-Shar' Declines Comment on al-Asad-Saddam Meeting

JN0507070196 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 0500 GMT 5 Jul 96

[Report by Muna Salim in Cairo]

[FBIS Translated Text] Signs to clear the atmosphere between the Arabs and Iran surfaced with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar's visit to Cairo. The Syrian foreign minister — who delivered a message to Egyptian President Husni Mubarak on Egyptian-Iranian relations on the one hand and Bahraini-Iranian relations on the other — asserted that he is not carrying out a mediation in the real sense of the word. However, he said, our interests require that we clear the atmosphere with Iran.

According to Egyptian diplomatic sources, Cairo and Damascus agreed to ease tension in Iranian-Gulf relations at this critical stage to keep the unified Arab position toward Israel intact, particularly since there are no indications that Washington intends to place any pressure on the new Israeli prime minister at this time.

Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa told AL-AHRAM that it is not in the Arabs' interest to antagonize Iran and Turkey and that it is important to stay on good neighborly relations with them.

The Syrian foreign minister surprised everyone in Cairo when he refused to confirm or deny press reports on a recent meeting between President Hafiz al-Asad and Iraqi President Saddam Husayn. In reply to a question on this meeting, Faruq al-Shar' merely reiterated the well-known Syrian position which underlines the need to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people and preserve Iraq's territorial integrity, as well as the need for Baghdad to implement all the international resolutions.

Syria: Al-Shar' Returns After Conveying al-Asad Message to Mubarak

JN0407152196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1415 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Egyptian President Muhammad Husni Mubarak received Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' before noon today. Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first undersecretary and director of President Mubarak's Office for Political Affairs, also attended the meeting.

The foreign minister conveyed a message from President Hafiz al-Asad to President Mubarak within the framework of continuous consultation between Syria and Egypt. The message deals with the developments in the region and following up on the results of the recent Cairo summit. Al-Shar' returned to Damascus this afternoon after his short visit to the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Syria: Ambassador Denies Syria's Involvement in Saudi Explosion

JN0407115096 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1110 GMT 4 Jul 96

[Hisham Milhim report from Washington]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] U.S. officials continue to say that the investigation into the explosion at the complex that houses U.S. soldiers in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, has not yet pinpointed the identity of the perpetrators or whether a specific country supports them.

Yesterday U.S. and Syrian officials denied a WASHINGTON POST report citing a U.S. official who said that those involved in the explosion crossed Syrian territory and might have gone to other countries in the region.

Walid al-Mu'allim, Syrian ambassador in Washington, strongly denied these claims, stressing that Syria is as alert to Saudi Arabia's security as it is on its own. The Syrian ambassador said that Syria's relations with Saudi Arabia are strong, deep-rooted, and have been enhanced since the tripartite summit in Damascus a few weeks ago. [passage omitted]

Syria: Al-Shar' 'Optimistic' About 'Rectifying' Regional Situation

JN0307161996 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1515 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In statements to our correspondent in Damascus Thana' al-Imam, Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' discussed Syrian-Turkish relations, and expressed satisfaction with the Syrian mediation between Iran and Bahrain.

[Begin recording] [al-Shar'] The efforts made by Syria over the past few days were crowned with success. We managed to heal the rift in relations between Bahrain and Iran and remove all that tarnished these relations in terms of misunderstanding, differences, and mutual media campaigns.

Bahrain and Iran agreed to immediately halt the media campaigns, and not to harm each other. They also agreed to begin laying solid foundations for returning bilateral relations to normal.

[Al-Imam] Is there any hope of similar mediation between Iran on the one hand and the United Arab Emirates and Egypt on the other?

[Al-Shar'] There is no doubt that the situation in the region needs to be rectified. There are tensions and problems between some states in the region. The Arab summit emphasized the importance of closing Arab ranks and improving the atmosphere in the region, particularly regarding neighboring states such as Turkey and Iran.

We are now optimistic about the possibility of rectifying this situation. I felt that the Iranian officials have the desire to improve relations with Egypt and that they appreciate Egypt's role in the Arab arena. We encouraged them to do so.

Moreover, the recent development in Turkey can be positively reflected on Syrian-Turkish relations in particular and on Arab-Turkish relations in general. We have in fact sent positive signals to the new Turkish Government, which, we hope, will contribute to solving the existing problems between the two neighbors, Syria and Turkey. [end recording]

Syria: Al-Shar' on Mediation Between Iran, Arabs, Ties to Turkey

NC0307185996 London MBC Television in Arabic 1820 GMT 3 Jul 96

[Interview with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus on 3 July—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Shar'] The efforts Syria made in the past few days have been crowned with success. We succeeded in healing the schism in relations between Bahrain and Iran and eliminating everything that marred these relations, either due to misunderstandings, disagreements, or mutual media campaigns. The two states have agreed to stop the media campaigns immediately and to refrain from hurting each other. They also agreed to set about building a solid foundation to restore normalcy to bilateral relations. We sensed responsiveness from the two countries' officials. I am satisfied at these significant results, which have led to resolving an important problem. The mediation actually relied on the Arab summit in resolving the problems the summit encountered in Cairo. [sentence as heard]

[Al-Imam] In the context of your mediation, did you seek to hold meetings between officials from Iran and Bahrain?

[Al-Shar'] The two sides will meet at a later date. During the talks I held in Tehran and Bahrain, I sensed a common desire by the foreign ministers of both countries to meet as soon as possible.

[Al-Imam] Your excellency; you said that this mediation was a result of the Cairo summit. Are there other mediations planned between Iran on the one hand and the United Arab Emirates and Egypt on the other?

[Al-Shar'] The situation in the region undoubtedly needs rectification. There are tensions and problems among some regional states. The Arab summit focused on the need to reunite Arabs and improve the regional climate, particularly with neighboring states such as Turkey and Iran. We are optimistic about the prospects of rectifying this situation. I sensed a desire among the Iranian officials to improve their relations with Egypt. I sensed also their appreciation of the Egyptian role in the Arab arena. We encouraged that.

Moreover, the recent change in Turkey can produce positive results involving Syrian-Turkish relations in particular, and Arab-Turkish relations in general. We have actually sent positive signals to the new Turkish Government. We hope this will help solve the existing disagreements between the two neighboring states, Syria and Turkey.

Syria: 3 New Ministers Appointed, 1 Relieved of Post

JN0307171596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad issued Decrees 69 and 70 for the year 1996, appointing three ministers and relieving one minister of his post.

Decree No. 70 stipulates that Muhammad 'Abd-al-Ra'uf Ziyadah will be appointed as minister of awqaf, Musallam Muhammad Hawwa as minister of state for cabinet affairs, and Muhammad Mahir Husni Jamal as minister of oil and mineral resources.

Decree No. 69 stipulates that Dr. Nadir Nabulsi, minister of oil and mineral resources, will be relieved of his post.

Syria: Papers on Bahrain-Iran Mediation, Netanyahu's 'Big Lie'

JN0407135596 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 4 Jul 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial, AL-BA'TH says Syria succeeded in resolving outstanding differences between Bahrain and Iran. This will have a great impact on the Arab and regional situation. It is also in harmony with the outcome of the Cairo summit.

The newspaper says there is a need for Arab and regional awakening. This requires more efforts to develop the means to confront Israel's aggressive behavior. Thus, it was necessary to make a quick move to contain differences through good offices, which are not alien to the policy of al-Asad's Syria. At the same time, these efforts stem from the decisions of the Cairo summit.

AL-BA'TH adds: Since the dawn of the Corrective Movement, Syria has adopted a policy toward brothers and friends based on mutual respect. The great leader, Hafiz al-Asad, is held in great esteem by Arab leaders and friends because of his honest and sincere attitude toward them. Therefore, the leaders of Bahrain and Iran responded to and appreciated his efforts. This contributed to the success of the Syrian initiative.

AL-BA'TH says this important step aborted Israel's policy which is based on poisoning the atmosphere and deepening inter-Arab and Arab-regional differences. The purpose of this Israeli policy is to divert the attention of the Arabs from their major issues and control their resources.

The newspaper concludes: Syria's initiative stemmed from its eagerness to translate the summit's outcome into a reality that embodies the strength of Arab and Islamic solidarity in the face of Israel's aggressive policy. This is meant to preserve pan-Arab and Islamic security. The Syrian initiative is part of serious efforts which will be followed by other serious steps by al-Asad's Syria, based on its important status, pioneering role, and its position as a strong defender of justice.

In one of its commentaries, AL-THAWRAH speaks about the same issue and asserts that Syria's success in settling differences between Bahrain and Iran is a bright spot that will eliminate the misunderstanding between them and close any gap through which enemies may infiltrate to sow sedition and discord.

AL-THAWRAH says the impact of this success will not be confined to these two countries. The results will greatly contribute toward improving Iranian-Arab relations in general, and Iranian-Gulf relations in particular. These results will also turn over a new leaf in relations of cooperation and good neighborliness and will close the door to foreign intervention in the affairs of the Gulf region.

AL-THAWRAH adds: We are in dire need now of reunion, closing ranks, and renouncing any differences that could be used by the enemies to achieve their evil and aggressive objectives.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH speaks about Netanyahu's big lie that relates to the peace process, asserting that peace — in the book of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu — is nothing but a big lie that can fool no one.

AL-THAWRAH says those who asked that Netanyahu be given a chance and enough time have implicitly expressed their concern over his election platform and then government policies. No doubt, the fact that the Netanyahu government did not discuss the fundamentals of real peace means that it does not want peace, even if it says publicly that it wants to resume the negotiations, adding to this the tragicomic phrase without prior conditions.

AL-THAWRAH adds: In Israel's book, this means dropping the foundations and frame of reference of peace so that Israel can easily turn the land-for-peace formula into peace-for-peace formula. This is a flagrant reminder of the objective sought by Yitzhaq Shamir, Likud leader and head of the Israeli Government when the Madrid conference was convened. Shamir's objective was to prolong the negotiations for 10 years so he could intensify settlement activity and impose a policy of fait accompli, thus making withdrawal impossible in light of such a great settlement activity.

Syria: Radio Views Syrian, Arab, Israeli Peace Positions

JN0407144496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 4 Jul 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear Listeners: Undoubtedly, inter-Arab relations are relations that bind the same people who live in several countries. Some of these relations may face a temporary skepticism or misunderstanding, or even serious tension from time to time, but all this can be solved or settled, or at least can be eased within the Arab framework.

This is was what happened as a result of the Syrian positions and the sincere Arab efforts made by President Hafiz al-Asad. These efforts contributed, along with the efforts of his brother Arab leaders, to the success of the Arab summit through adopting a collective Arab position which supports Syria and the other Arab parties in the peace process. This position shows awareness of the dangers caused by the recent changes in the region which threaten the peace process.

The Arabs as a united regional group or as individual Arab countries have relations with other countries. These relations are either good, close, or neighborly relations. However, there is a group of countries that should have closer and more special relations with the Arabs — these are the Islamic countries.

The Arabs and the Islamic countries and peoples are bound by a joint cultural, political, economic, and social history. Relations between the Arab and the

Islamic states are based on deep historic and geographic ties. Hence, we can understand the relaxed atmosphere that prevailed in the Arab and Islamic states when Syria, led by al-Asad, began its mediation between Bahrain and Iran. This mediation was welcomed by the countries. Based on this, we also understand that this relaxed atmosphere was a result of the mutual friendly signals exchanged between Syria and Turkey. Syria has repeatedly declared that it only wants good for Turkey and its people, and that it wants the best relations with Turkey. Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan announced that Israel should abide by the UN resolutions and withdraw from the territories it invaded, including the Golan. He also said that it is important for the stability of the region that Turkey establishes closer relations with all fraternal Islamic states in the region.

These political developments are in the Arabs' favor, and they demonstrate President al-Asad's efforts to place the Arabs in the best negotiating position in the peace process through spreading and deepening understanding among the Arabs, and between the Arabs and the Islamic states and other countries.

These developments are taking place at a time when the Israeli right wing is violating the Security Council resolutions, which are the basis on which the peace process was launched. Immediately after assuming power in Israel, the Israeli prime minister declared his rejection of withdrawal from the Golan and the occupied Arab territories, and his rejection of leaving occupied Arab Jerusalem and the right of the Palestinian people to establish their national independent state. Yesterday, this Israeli prime minister said that if the Security Council resolutions call for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and for secure borders, he only accepts what is related to the security issues — of course only Israel's security, not the security of any other party. He also said that he rejects withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories.

So how does the world view this Israeli disregard of the international community and its resolutions, especially since the Israeli prime minister announced this position days after the summit of the seven industrialized nations, which included the United States and the Russian Federation? This summit, and the European Union summit, emphasized that Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories is the basis of the peace process in accordance with the land-for-peace principle.

Syria: Press on 'Successful' Political Move, Netanyahu Statements

JN0507071896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0445 GMT 5 Jul 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial today, AL-BA'TH comments on Syria's good offices to clear the atmosphere between Arab and Islamic states and rally their energies to face up to the serious challenges and put an end to the hostile forces' ambitions, schemes, and plots. The paper stresses that Syria's extensive move in this regard is a speedy and practical translation of the resolutions of the recent Arab summit conference in Cairo. The summit stressed that all available means must be employed to close the Arab ranks in particular and to improve relations between Arab and Islamic states in the region in general, taking into consideration that such an undertaking is the basic condition for removing the differences and impurities between those states. Those differences and impurities are the outcome of the disputes that the hostile forces, led by Israel, are trying to spread in the region to evade the peace process and preoccupy Arab and Islamic states with marginal differences to poison their relations and prevent them from reaching an agreement and coordinating their stands.

AL-BA'TH says that Israel's new policy explicitly and publicly seeks to undermine the peace process and explode the situation in the region. Israel's objective is to perpetuate its occupation of the Arab territories and to absolutely block any international effort or move to resume the peace negotiations and lead them to their desired objective, which is the attainment of a just, comprehensive peace based on the UN resolutions, the land-for-peace principle, and the Madrid conference formula.

AL-BA'TH says: In view of these developments, all peoples of the region — that is, the Arab states, Turkey, and Iran — must agree as soon as possible on a specific formula of relations of friendship and brotherhood based on the fact that they are exposed to the same danger and that this danger spares nobody.

AL-BA'TH concludes: The great success al-Asad's Syria in its initiative to mend fences between Bahrain and Iran spread extensive satisfaction on Arab and Islamic levels. This success revives hopes and calls for optimism.

On the same subject, AL-THAWRAH carries an article under the headline "The Successful Political Move." It says: The Syrian political success in resolving the dispute between Iran and Bahrain and the message

President Hafiz al-Asad sent yesterday to President Husni Mubarak on regional developments are a practical translation of the resolutions of the Cairo Arab summit. They fall within the framework of the intensive and successful Syrian diplomatic move which began at the Damascus tripartite summit and continued at the Cairo summit to close Arab ranks and confront the major and serious threats to our nation at this delicate phase of its history. This move also aims to clear the atmosphere and improve Arab relations with neighboring states, such as Iran and Turkey, so as to provide security and stability.

AL-THAWRAH says that Syria's success in swiftly containing the Iran-Bahrain dispute is yet another regional success to be added to Syria's many successes in the interest of the basic Arab issue, as shown in the major international support at international forums and appreciation for Syria's principled, constant stand on Arab issues and the issue of a just, comprehensive peace.

Concluding its commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: Every Syrian success in unifying Arab efforts, clearing the Arab atmosphere, and improving relations with neighboring countries, such as Turkey and Iran, enhances joint Arab action through which the Arabs can address the world with one language to make it better understand our causes and sincere stands.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH discusses the resolutions of international legitimacy which constitutes the basic terms of reference of the Madrid conference. The paper says: The new Israeli Government insists on defying the world and burying the peace process by making daily statements asserting its blunt refusal to respect the principles and relevant resolutions of international legitimacy or to abide by the land-for-peace initiative, which constitutes the basic terms of reference of the Madrid conference. Therefore, Israel is raising no's that reflect extremism, insistence on settlement building, and a tendency for war as a substitute for the resolutions calling for withdrawal from the Golan, southern Lebanon, Jerusalem, and other occupied Arab territories, and for recognizing the Palestinian people's national legitimate rights.

The paper refers to the statements of Binyamin Netanyahu and his war minister, in which they announced that Israel has its own interpretations of the UN Security Council resolutions and that the land-for-peace formula is not the formula to be accepted by Israel or respected in the negotiations on any of the tracks.

AL-THAWRAH says this intransigent approach does not only reverse the Madrid process and its terms of reference and defy the international and U.S. efforts in particular, but also constitutes an attempt to impose Israel's policy and destroy the peace process.

Concluding its commentary, AL-THAWRAH says that the peace dialogue does not tolerate any more maneuvers. Peace will not be attained unless the need to fully give back the territory to its Arab owners is respected and unless the relevant UN resolutions are implemented.

Syria: Radio Urges Unified Regional Stand To Face 'Zionist Plan'

JN0307181496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1135 GMT 3 Jul 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: The extensive and active efforts made by Syria on many levels reflect Syria's pioneering role and pan-Arab and regional status. Syria played an outstanding role in ensuring the success of the Arab summit which was held in Cairo recently. Syria is pressing ahead with its national and historic mission to clear the Arab and Islamic atmosphere and unite ranks and positions in order to face the challenges posed to the countries and peoples of the region.

The sincere and genuine initiative launched by His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad to patch up differences in and clear the atmosphere of the Arab-Iranian relations, particularly the Iranian-Bahraini relations, comes within this context. The two parties welcomed and showed interest in the Syrian initiative. The Iranian and Bahraini officials expressed appreciation for His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad's keenness to maintain the security and safety of the region based on Syria's pan-Arab commitments. They praised the Syrian good offices which will contribute to improving relations between Bahrain and Iran.

His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of Bahrain, and Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani both asserted that they will respond to the Syrian efforts, and thanked His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad for his interest in Arab causes and the region's security. The Iranian and Bahraini foreign ministers also praised the Syrian efforts and His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad's eagerness to ensure the security, stability, and safety of the region. They said that Syria made good efforts upon kind directives from His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad as part of Syria's pan-Arab commitment to the security and stability of the region and persistent efforts to bring about a unified position of the Arab and Islamic world to face the common dangers.

The Syrian initiative to settle differences and clear the atmosphere in the region stems from Syria's deep-rooted and absolute belief that the factors of cohesion and coalescence among the peoples and countries of the region are far more than the factors of division and disunity. Syria is convinced that the region shares the same destiny. Whatever takes place in any country in the region — whether a good or bad development — will affect the rest of the countries.

The Syrian initiative and the success it achieved amid the current circumstances acquires a special importance. The positive statements that were made by the Iranian and Bahraini officials, which are completely harmonious with the initiative, assert that the countries of the region can solve their problems by themselves and away from the interference of other parties. Such interference by foreign parties does not aim in most cases to solve the differences, but rather to deepen them and increase tension in the region, thus providing a justification and cover for controlling and imposing hegemony over our peoples, countries, resources, destiny, present, and future.

Accordingly, the efforts Syria made and is still making to unite Arab ranks and clear the atmosphere between the Arabian Gulf states and Iran proceed from an unwavering conviction that the differences, no matter how big, will remain marginal, given the dangers threatening the region. Rising above these differences, unifying positions, and boosting cooperation and solidarity is the only means to face the challenges of the future represented in the Zionist plan, which is armed with state of the art weapons and the most malevolent and racist ideologies.

Israel rejected just and comprehensive peace, the resolutions of international legitimacy, and the land-for-peace principle. It also did not conceal its intention to impose its hegemony and sway over the region through resorting to force, threatening to use it, and deepening inter-Arab, Arab-Iranian, and Arab-Turkish disputes. Israel acts in this way because it realizes full well that maximizing and inflaming these differences is the shortest and most effective way to achieve its objectives.

However, the Syria of al-Asad realized right from the beginning the essence and danger of the Israeli policy. It warned the Arabs and Muslims against this policy and made and still makes efforts to settle differences and unite ranks. Syria has a comprehensive view of the region. The historical, geographical, and ideological factors that unify the region are the same factors that unify the region's destiny. Therefore, Syria calls on the countries and peoples of the region to comprehend this fact and to adopt a unified stand to face the challenges and dangers that threaten everybody, without exception.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Rabbani Approves Appointment of New Cabinet Ministers

LD0307194096 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1600 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The presidential press office reported that esteemed Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, has issued the following decree concerning the appointment of cabinet ministers of the Islamic State of Afghanistan:

In order to restore nationwide peace and security in the country, to attract all effective forces of the Afghan society in government affairs, to create an atmosphere of confidence and understanding, to create finally a secure living environment for compatriots and to strengthen the existing peace momentum, I approve, on the basis of a proposal by the prime minister, the appointment of the following individuals as ministers in the following ministries:

1. Esteemed Wahidollah Saba'un as minister of national defense.
2. Esteemed Mohammad Yonus Qanuni as minister of internal affairs.
3. Esteemed engineer Ahmad Shah Ahmadzai as minister of education.
4. Esteemed 'Abdol Hadi Arghandewal as minister of finance.
5. Esteemed Hojjat ol-Eslam Sayd Mohammad 'Ali Jawid as minister of planning.
6. Esteemed Qeyamoddin Ershad as minister of information and culture.
7. Esteemed Mowlawi Samiollah Najebi as minister of martyrs and the disabled.
8. Esteemed Sayd Hosayn A'lemi Balkhi as minister of commerce.
9. Esteemed Sayd Hoseyn Anwari as minister of labor and social affairs.

[Signed] Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Acting Foreign Affairs Minister Appointed

LD0407160996 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A report says that the appointment of nine ministers and one acting minister have so far been approved. The following list of ministers has been announced. [passage omitted]

Abdorrahim Ghafurzai has been appointed as acting minister of foreign affairs.

The country's president has also issued a decree, addressed to the Office of the Prime Minister, saying that in those ministries for which no new ministers have yet been appointed, the former ministers will continue their work until the appointment of their replacements.

Afghanistan: Cabinet To Swear In 4 Jul; Wahdat, Mas'ud To Hold Talks

BK0407114696 Hong Kong AFP in English 1130 GMT 4 Jul 96

[Report by Marc Lavine]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, July 4 (AFP) — The first nine ministers appointed by Afghanistan's controversial new prime minister are to be sworn in at a ceremony here Thursday [4 July], top government officials said.

The ministers' appointments were announced late Wednesday by President Borhanoddin Rabbani, just a week after his former arch enemy, Golboddin Hekmatyar of the Hezb-e Eslami, took over as head of government.

"The first ministers to be appointed under the new coalition set- up will formally take their oaths of office later today (Thursday)," said presidential spokesman 'Abdol Aziz Murad.

"We believe this was a major and important step in the development of the new government, although a lot more work has still to be done on the future form of the administartion," he added.

The ministry of defence was assigned to Hekmatyar's top intelligence chief, Wahidollah Sabawoon, while the finance portfolio went to one of his political advisors, Abdol Haddi Arghandewal.

Rabbani's former defence minister, Mohammed Yunus Qanooni, was shifted to the powerful interior ministry, while former caretaker prime minister Ahmad Shah Ahmedzai, of the coalition Itehad-e Eslami, took over at the ministry of education.

Another member of the Itehad — a conservative Islamic party — Qiamuddin Kashaf, took the helm of the influential ministry of information and culture, which controls the state media.

But the long-awaited announcement of the first cabinet seats, rather than settling the new transitional coalition administration, appeared pose more crucial questions than it answered, analysts here said.

Only nine of the 26 portfolios were filled by the premier, and two of the top offices of state — the ministers of foreign affairs and civil aviation — were left vacant.

In addition, the official role of Rabbani's all-powerful military supremo, Ahmad Shah Mas'ud, believed by many observers to be the most influential figure in the Kabul government, remained unclear.

"The prime minister has to make some sort of announcement now to dispel suspicions that the coalition parties could not agree on suitable candidates, and to assert his new role as an effective head of government," a highly placed source told AFP.

"The government has effectively bought itself more time to consult other opposition parties on whether they also intend to cross over to Kabul and to settle any disputes over candidates for the top posts," he added.

Murad agreed, saying that the other 17 top offices would remain under caretaker administration until it became clear which of the country's plethora of opposition groups would follow Hekmatyar's spectacular lead and join the once-embattled government.

"We will wait for other groups to decide whether they will join us before permanently filling the other posts. Everbody is welcome in this government," Murad said.

"It seems logical that if a problem can be solved by awarding certain ministries to other parties, that this will be done."

Officials and analysts here say that leaders of the powerful and neutral Nangahar Shoora, based in the eastern city of Jalalabad look set to join the administration following a visit there by Rabbani just two days after Hekmatyar entered the government.

In addition, Shia leader Karim Khalili — head of the influential Hezb-e Wahdat party, based in the strategic central province of Bamyan — is preparing to hold talks with Mas'ud on conditions for his coming to Kabul, analysts and sources revealed.

If the former warring factions cross over to the fast-expanding government, the new alliance of all the former mojahedin parties, which routed the invading Soviets from Afghanistan after a 10-year battle, will effectively be united against the Taleban militia, analysts said.

The only other group apart from the Taleban — which control about half the country — not to join the government would be northern warlord General Abdol Rashid Dostam's Jumbish-e Milli, they said.

"Such an alliance of Jihadi parties would certainly make Dostam think twice about remaining politically and geographically isolated in his northern territories," on foreign analyst said.

"These deals could therefore conceivably change Afghanistan's political and military landscape permanently and could even result in an outbreak of peace for the first time in 16 years," he added.

Afghanistan: Khalili Ready To Hold Talks With Kabul Government

LD0407191896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Abdol Karim Khalili, leader of the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party] in Bamian [Province], has announced his readiness to hold talks with the government of Afghanistan.

According to an IRNA report from Kabul, 'Abdol Karim Khalili during an interview on Thursday [4 July], in welcoming the coalition between Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan and the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] of Hekmatyar, considered this [coalition] to be a good omen, believing it was not against any other group.

Khalili also said that the Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami, in emphasizing the fact that the problem in Afghanistan cannot be resolved by fighting, expresses the hope that the Taleban and the Rabbani government can also hold talks and reach agreement.

Afghanistan: Rabbani Sends 4 Jul Message To Clinton

LD0307205796 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Esteemed Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, has sent the following congratulatory telegram addressed to the President of the United States:

His Excellency William Clinton, President of the United States,

On behalf of the people, the Islamic State of Afghanistan, and myself, I am delighted to express my best wishes and congratulations to you and through you to the people of the United States on the occasion of 4 July, 220th anniversary of the United States independence. I am sure the existing friendly relations between our countries are in the interest of peace and security in the region and in the world [words indistinct]

The Islamic State of Afghanistan hopes that the United States can further increase its efforts to end foreign interference in our war- torn country, which imposes enormous calamities on the Afghan nation. I would like to take this opportunity to express once again the best wishes of the people of Afghanistan for the prosperity and well-being of the United States' people and your good health.

Esteemed Najibollah Lafra'i, minister of state in foreign affairs, has also sent a congratulatory telegram to Washington addressed to the U.S. secretary of state.

Afghanistan: Radio Reports Britain Pledges Economic Aid

LD0307215096 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning, esteemed Hamidullah Tarzi, economic affairs minister counsellor in the prime minister's office met Peter Lewan, the economic counsellor of the British Embassy in Islamabad.

The prime minister's press office told BAKHTAR that at this meeting esteemed Tarzi briefed the envoy about the economic situation and price increases in Kabul.

He asked the British Government, through the British envoy, to assist Afghanistan in various economic areas.

Lewan then pledged his country's cooperation in the reconstruction and revival of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan: 3 Killed in Taleban Rocket Attacks on Kabul

LD0307184196 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Radio Message of Freedom correspondent reported from Kabul that yesterday [2 July] once again the Taleban group carried out savage rocket attacks on Kabul city, killing three innocent citizens and injuring another six people. The report adds that these rockets caused, in addition to loss of life, heavy material losses too. These rockets, which hit crowded areas of Kabul city, were fired by the mercenary Taleban forces from the south and southeast of Kabul city.

It should be mentioned that on Sunday [30 June] and Monday [1 July] the Taleban group also fired rockets on Kabul city, killing [words indistinct] and injuring 14 people.

Afghanistan: Taleban Rockets Target Kabul, 1 Person Injured

LD0307204896 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] As a result of a rocket landing on a house in the ninth ward, one person was injured today. BAKHTAR reported that this morning the Taleban fired two rockets at residential areas in the west of Kabul. No loss of life was reported. This afternoon one rocket hit a housing block in Microrayan [housing estate in west of the city] which injured one person. The building was damaged.

India

India: 'Sources' Predict CTBT Not To 'Sour' Ties to Moscow

BK0407115696 Madras THE HINDU in English 4 Jul 96 p 11

[Report by Atul Aneja]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Despite a recent demarche by Moscow, differences over the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) between India and Russia are unlikely to sour growing ties, highly placed sources here said.

According to sources, while the test ban was being debated in Geneva, the Ru?sian mission here issued a demarche, advocating India's participation in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The note, however, observed all the expected diplomatic niceties, the sources said.

At Geneva last month, Russian negotiators insisted that a worldwide ban on nuclear explosions could be implemented only after India, Pakistan and Israel, the three nuclear threshold countries, participated. In fact, Moscow went out of its way to get New Delhi's nod.

"The demarche reiterated the known Russian position in favour of the CTBT. While appreciating India's concerns, it advocated New Delhi's participation in the Treaty. It also spoke about direct talks between Moscow and Washington as the fora for deciding on disarmament steps" the sources added.

Officials Optimistic

South Block officials have taken note of the demarche, but do not apprehend that it would negatively affect the growing bilateral relationship. " We are clear that the recent expression of the Russian position on the CTBT is in no way a means to pressurise India and will not affect ties on the bilateral track" officials here said.

The optimism could be attributed, in part to the recent official meetings with the Russians. After the demarche, a senior foreign office official met the Russian Charge d'Affaires here. The Indian envoy in Moscow also held a discussion with the key official in the Russian disarmament section, Mr. Sergei Kisylyak [name as published].

Besides, the two sides, as late as February this year, had talked in detail and appreciated each others position on the nuclear issue. "Detailed discussions on the CTBT were held during Mr. Kisylak's visit in February," the sources said.

Recent political changes in Moscow, which include a revamp of the Russian national security apparatus, could also have triggered the demarche, analysts here say. "Key officials in the Russia's national security apparatus have been sacked after General Alexander Lebed has been officially accommodated. The reiteration of the Russian position could well be reflecting the flux in its decision-making structure," an analyst said.

Special relationship

Fractured decision-making, where the arms control negotiators are not necessarily sensitised to the nuances of the New Delhi-Moscow relationship, could also explain the Russian stance. Besides, the Russians, heavily dependent on Western finances have to constantly perform on a tight rope.

Nevertheless, observers here also emphasise that Russia has always kept away from collective G-Seven demarches, indicating Moscow's interest in special ties with New Delhi. "Russia has never participated in collective G-Seven protests, and this is an indication of the special relationship," the sources said.

Sources here are quick to point out that Russian leaders have kept away from comment, and this is yet another signal that the relationship is on track. "The CTBT was not even mentioned during the visit to India in end March by the Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Yevgeni Primakov. So was the case when the former Prime Minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao visited Moscow in June 1994," they added.

India: German MP Says Western Hostages in Kashmir Still Alive

BK0507093396 Hong Kong AFP in English
0916 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SRINAGAR, India, July 5 (AFP) — The brother of one of the four Western hostages held by Muslim guerrillas in Kashmir made an emotional appeal for their release Friday as they began a second year in captivity.

A German MP accompanying the brother, meanwhile, said the four — German Dirk Hasert, Britons Paul Wells and Keith Mangan, and American Donald Hutchings — were alive.

Bernd Hasert, elder brother of Dirk, told a news conference here: "I appeal to the hostage takers to release our loved ones on humanitarian grounds. Please end our ordeal.

"Let me and my mother know. Give us a sign. Contact us, talk to our representatives."

He was flanked by three German MPs who also came to the Kashmir Valley on Thursday to plead for the freedom of the four Western tourists, who were seized by the previously unknown Muslim group Al- Faran on July 4, 1995.

American John Childs, who was also abducted, escaped. Norwegian Hans Christian-Ostro was beheaded by his captors in August after New Delhi refused to free jailed militants.

MP Vera Lengsfeld told reporters that she had been told by Kashmiri Muslim leaders that the hostages were alive.

"The Kashmiri leaders assured us that the hostages are still alive, although they could not give us any proof," she said. Vera did not identify the leaders she spoke to.

The MP also appealed for their immediate release.

"Our message to the hostage-takers is — release them," she said, reading out a prepared statement. "There is no point in prolonging their suffering, and it is hurting not only the families but also the Kashmiri cause."

Al-Faran has broken all contacts with the authorities since November, and doubts have surfaced in recent weeks if the hostages are alive after a militant arrested by the Kashmir police said they had been killed.

Lengsfeld said the families "suffer immeasurable distress at this tragic anniversary.

"The story of the potential killing of the hostages has left the relatives in utter despair," she added.

The German MPs, including Gisela Schroeter and Johannes Selle, showed some 200,000 signatures of German citizens expressing sympathy to the hostages' families and appealing for the release.

More than 12,000 people have died in a Muslim separatist campaign raging in Kashmir since 1989. The Kashmir militants have frequently kidnapped Indians and foreigners for ransom or in support of other demands.

India: 1 Killed as Pakistani Troops Shoot at Kashmir Village

BK0407155496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistani troops resorted to unprovoked firing from across the Line of Control yesterday on Digwa village in Punch sector of Jammu and Kashmir. A 10-year old girl was killed in the firing.

Several civilians have been injured in the firing by Pakistani troops on the border villages of the Punch sector during the last six days.

India: At Least 6 Kashmir Militants Killed in Encounter

BK0507092796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, at least six militants have been killed in an encounter with the BSF [Border Security Force] in Bhadarwah tehsil [revenue area] of Doda District. Reports say the encounter which started at 1800 last evening is still on. A huge quantity of arms and ammunition has been recovered.

India: Proposals Made to Pakistan for Increasing Embassy Personnel

BK0407020296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has proposed increasing the strength of the consular staff at its high commission in Islamabad for expediting visa procedures. The external affairs minister, Mr. I.K. Gujral, told newsmen in New Delhi that a suggestion has also been made to allow Indian High Commission personnel to visit Karachi for on-the-spot issuance of visas. The high commission has been asked to increase the dispersal of visas by 50 to 60 percent. Mr. Gujral said the proposals made unilaterally by India are aimed at creating an atmosphere of friendship and positive environment for talks.

India: Prime Minister Speaks on Oil Price Hike, Ayodhya Dispute

BK0407014996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has ruled out the possibility of reviewing the decision of enhancing the prices of LPG [Liquefied Petroleum Gas], diesel, and petrol. Talking to newsmen in Lucknow this evening, Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda made it clear that the decision to increase the prices has been taken after meticulous care. When asked to comment on the allegation against the union home minister, Mr. Taslimuddin, published in a section of the press, the prime minister said that he has asked the union home secretary to find out the truth from the Bihar government. The prime minister said that the Ayodhya [temple-mosque] tangle will be referred to the Supreme Court after consulting the various political parties.

India: Prime Minister Assures Timely Elections in Uttar Pradesh

BK0407015996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has ordered an immediate release of 50 percent of arrears payment due to the sugarcane growers in Uttar Pradesh. Addressing the state Janata Dal convention in Lucknow this evening, Mr. H.D. Deve Gowda also announced that a bill to provide 33 percent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha, state assemblies, and panchayat [local body] institutions will be introduced in Parliament after consultation with all political parties. The prime minister cautioned the people against the evil designs of communal forces trying to divide the country in the name of caste, creed, and religion. Allaying the apprehension of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] about postponing the election to the state assembly, the prime minister declared that it will he held on time.

The information and broadcasting minister, Mr. C.M. Ibrahim, Railway Minister Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, Janata Dal president and Bihar Chief Minister Mr. Lalu Prasad Yadav, and Janata Dal working president, Mr. Sharad Yadav also addressed the convention.

India: Rao Asks Partymen To Collect Complaints on Antiparty Acts

BK0507005096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Congress president, Mr. Narasimha Rao, has asked the party office bearers to examine whether Mr. Karunakaran [former union minister for industries] continues to be the member of the All India Congress Committee [AICC] and its Working Committee [CWC]. He was presiding over a meeting of the office bearers of the party in New Delhi today. The secretary of the Kerala Pradesh [state] Congress Committee, in a letter to the party president, had pointed out that Mr. Karunakaran, who was an AICC member by virtue of his being the leader of the Congress Legislature Party in Kerala can no longer be the member of the AICC and CWC. The party spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, told newsmen that most of the office bearers were of the view that prima facie what the letter says is correct. Mr. Narasimha Rao also asked the office bearers to collect all complaints about antiparty activities, particularly by important persons. He said he will take strict action after they have been identified.

Iran

Iran, Bahrain Reportedly Agree To End 'Negative Propaganda'

LD0407183796 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] [Announcer] The fifth round of tripartite meetings on economic cooperation between the Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkmenistan, and Armenia ended with the signing of three cooperation documents in Ashgabat. A short time after the signing of those documents, Foreign Minister Velayati returned to Iran. In an interview with our correspondent, he said: According to the tripartite economic cooperation documents, Iran will be offering Turkmenistan the equivalent of $20 million worth of goods and services in return for receiving its required goods from Armenia. Turkmenistan will in turn export $20 million worth of gas to Armenia.

Mr. Velayati added: In this regard a secretariat is to be set up in Iran's Central Bank in Tehran to carry out the necessary coordination for the exchange of goods between the three countries.

[Begin recording] [Velayati] Such cooperation and its method is unprecedented in Iran's history, in the history of Iran's foreign relations. Bearing in mind the efficiency of such cooperation, every day we are seeing more requests from countries from the Commonwealth of Independent States, that is the CIS, or countries outside the CIS, European as well as Asian countries. We will be responding to those requests as far as our resources allow.

[Correspondent] [Syrian Foreign Minister] Faruq al-Shar' paid a visit to Tehran a few days ago. It seems that his visit was related to ties between Iran and Bahrain. Was any agreement reached between the two countries regarding the resolution of the misunderstandings?

[Velayati] Of course the mission of Faruq al-Shar' was not entirely devoted to mediation between Iran and Bahrain. President Hafiz al-Asad's message contained a briefing on the Arab summit and that was handed over to Iran's esteemed president. At the same time, during our talks he gave me the details of the latest developments. One of the objectives of Faruq al-Shar's visit to Iran was the one you referred to. He came to Iran twice and visited Bahrain twice and eventually succeeded in taking the first step, or carrying out the first stage, of normalizing relations between Iran and Bahrain. That can be interpreted as eliminating the misunderstanding or an effort toward eliminating it. The ending of the negative propaganda campaigns by the two sides is what Iran and Bahrain agreed on through Syria's mediation. As you know Iran's policy is to have good neighborly relations with its neighboring countries, including Bahrain. [end recording]

[Announcer] On the recent aggression by Turkish helicopters on our border regions, Mr. Velayati said: A joint delegation is to study the event and in view of the policies announced by the new Turkish government and the wisdom shown by Mr. Erbakan, we hope that we won't witness such incidents [again]. Mr. Velayati stressed that the Islamic Republic of Iran will not compromise its national sovereignty and the security of its citizens.

Iran: Foreign Ministry's Khorram on Bahrain, Gulf Issues

LD0407194796 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 29 Jun 96 p 15

['Ali Khorram, Foreign Ministry senior adviser, in an interview with RESALAT: "Anti-Iran Resolution by Arabs Lacks Legal Credibility"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Bahrain has recently claimed that it uncovered a coup plot in the country and immediately accused the Islamic Republic of Iran of involvement in the alleged plot. What is your opinion about the motives of the Manama government regarding these stances?

[Khorram] Unfortunately, it has become a common policy in the region for countries to attribute their internal problems to foreign factors. As these countries are unable to establish internal sovereignty, therefore, to justify the civil unrest in their countries, which is mainly the result of mismanagement by their rulers, they attribute it to foreign sources.

You recall the time when the regime of the Shah was also following the same policy in recent times and was trying to attribute the revolution of the Iranian people to communists and the former Soviet Union. Even in the past few months when an explosion occurred in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia attributed it immediately and without any investigation to abroad. Later it became clear and they acknowledged that the explosion had been the work of internal elements.

It would better if the Bahraini rulers would also realize where the root of the problem lies and try to resolve it. The Bahraini problem will not be solved through ill-considered accusations.

[Correspondent] We have noticed recently that in a resolution, the Arab countries backed the claims made by Bahrain and the UAE [United Arab Emirates] against Iran. The saddest thing of all is Syria's agreement to the statement. Please explain the situation:

[Khorram] We have always stated our concerns about the consequences of such stances and explained our position to the Syrian side to some extent. The important fact is that resolutions that are issued by the Arab countries every now and then against Islamic Iran lack any value from a legal point of view. These resolutions represent the positions that are taken by the Arab countries themselves and are approved by them in a one-sided court. Therefore, the articles of these resolutions are never discussed. Iran, which is a party to the issue, is not represented at the sessions [of Arab countries] to defend its positions and explain the ambiguities. Therefore, the values of resolutions are equivalent to zero from the legal standpoint.

[Correspondent] We see certain Arab countries in the region giving military bases to the United States while expressing an interest in expanding their relations with Iran. In view of the fact that Iranian and American interests are incompatible, what is the reason for such a contradiction in the policies of these countries? And what measures could Iran pursue to prevent the expansion of U.S. influence in these countries?

[Khorram] Every country has the right to decide independently about its domestic affairs. But as far as Iran is concerned, we think the U.S. presence is damaging to the security of the region. We have said this frankly on every occasion.

[Correspondent] We recently witnessed the setting up and the inauguration of a U.S. radio transmitter in Kuwait. How do you analyse this Kuwaiti action?

[Khorram] The Islamic republic has warned Kuwaiti officials about this and the Kuwaitis have promised to remove the radio station from their soil. The Kuwaiti officials have become aware of the problem and say that the setting up of the radio station was according to an earlier agreement and that there was no agreement for the radio to broadcast anti-Iranian programs. Anyway, we are waiting for the Kuwaitis to take a practical step.

[Correspondent] Some foreign news agencies recently claimed that differences have emerged between the governments of Iran and Lebanon over the form of Iranian aid to Lebanon's Hizballah. How true is this rumor?

[Khorram] Iran and Lebanon have no differences about our moral and political support for Hizballah. We provide this support only within the context of Lebanon's national sovereignty.

Iran Denies Egyptian Press Reports of Bases in Sudan

*LD0407195496 Tehran IRNA in English
1925 GMT 4 Jul 96*

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Athens, July 4, IRNA — The Islamic Republic of Iran has categorically denied the existence of any Iranian military bases in Sudan. Iran's interests office in Cairo Wednesday issued a statement saying that reports in some Egyptian newspapers about the presence of Iranian military personnel in Sudan were false, Cairo daily AL-AHRAR Thursday reported.

Iran: Rafsanjani—Tehran To Sue U.S. Over Frozen Assets 'One Day'

*LD0507095596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian
0810 GMT 5 Jul 96*

[Second Friday prayer sermon delivered by Iranian President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani at Tehran University — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. [passage omitted: beginning of the second sermon, commemorating some of the revolution's martyrs]

One of the important anniversaries we are approaching right now is the anniversary of America's decision in 1359 [year ending 21 March 1981] to freeze Iranian assets held in that country. By that decision, a large sum of our cash assets, together with some military equipment and other valuable goods we had paid for, were sequestrated. All these assets are still withheld.

This is a historical crime by America, and for sure, one day we will successfully prosecute America in an international court. There is absolutely no logic behind this great injustice and this betrayal of our trust.

We are still facing similar pressures from America. However, God willing, today we are witnessing that disgrace has befallen America, its bullying attitude, and its policies of sanction and embargo. Even countries that have always been cooperating most closely with America in military, political, and economic affairs have not been able to tolerate this recent round of thuggery.

What you see is the consequence of bullying and thuggery. Struggle against crime and injustice, a clear example of which is America's attitude, is the main characteristic of our Islamic system and revolution. [passage omitted]

Iran: Further on Rafsanjani Comments on U.S. Seizure of Assets

LD0507120096 Tehran IRNA in English
1137 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 5, IRNA — President Hashemi-Rafsanjani today termed the U.S. freezing of Iranian assets in 1980 as a "historical criminal act".

"We will certainly bring the United States to justice at international tribunals one day to be condemned (for its criminal act)," the president told a large Friday prayer gathering in Tehran.

The U.S. Administration seized all Iranian assets in the United States in 1980 following the take-over of the American spy den (embassy) in Tehran by a group of Muslim students who were followers of line of the late Imam Khomeyni.

"Nothing can justify such breach of trust and injustice done by the United States against the Iranian people," the president said.

"Thank God, we are now witnessing the disgraceful defeat of Washington's unilateral sanction and bullying policies (against Iran) because even America's closest allies could not tolerate such intimidations," he pointed out.

In the recently concluded meeting of the Group of Seven leading industrial countries in Lyon, France, President Clinton failed to convince other G-7 member states to join it in its unilateral embargo against Iran.

The nature of the Islamic system and revolution is based on struggle with oppression and crime.

Elsewhere in his sermon, President Rafsanjani said that if the Americans come to realize the depth of Iranian people's satisfaction with their officials, they will never think about confronting Iran.

"(Iranian) people's trust in officials foil the plots being hatched by the enemies of the Islamic revolution," the president said.

Referring to his two day inspection tour of Khorasan Province, northeastern Iran, for inauguration of several huge economic projects, the president said "the enthusiasm shown by people in northwestern part of the province during opening ceremonies of the projects in fact indicated their deep confidence in officials who are serving them."

"I wish domestic and foreign mass media could reflect such emotions so as to make enemies understand people's deep attachment to and trust in their officials," the substitute Friday prayer leader of Tehran said.

Terming reconstrcution and development process in Iran as "very promising" the president said that the projects which went on stream in Khorasan Province indicated the leap forward progress made in infrastructure and basic industries in various parts of the country.

Rafsanjani put the economic value of the projects put into operation in the cities of Esfarayen, Bojnourd, Shirvan, Quchan and in Jajerm district over the past couple of days at Rls.[rials] 5,000 billion. "These are all in a region who saw the inauguration of the huge silk road project two months ago," he added.

The state-of-the-art technology has been used in the Khorasan petrochemical complex entirely designed and constructed by Iranian experts, he said, adding that some dlrs.[dollars] 220 million has been saved for the country in setting up the petrochemical plant in Khorasan.

The president said "the products of the complex will fully cut Iran's imports of urea from abroad. Other projects, too, will make the country self-sufficient in various fields.

"The plant in Esfarayen produces basic components required by fundamental industries. Other factories to become operational in the next one and half a years' time will prevent the country from importing hundreds of millions of dollars worth of thick seamless pipes and alumina powder."

President Rafsanjani said that Khorasan Province due to its closeness to the Central Asian countries is of special significance at regional and international levels.

Iran: Rafsanjani Sends Message of Congratulations to Yeltsin

LD0507101696 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani has sent a message to Russian President Boris Yeltsin congratulating him on his reelection.

A part of the message states: I hope that in your excellency's new term, the historial ties between the two great nations of Iran and Russia, who at present are experiencing a new chapter in close bilateral cooperation, may be consolidated and expanded even further.

On behalf of myself and the Islamic Republic of Iran's Government and nation, I would like to wish victory for the Russian nation, and health and success for your excellency.

Iran: Velayati—Country Welcomes Yeltsin's Election Victory

LD0407170696 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In response to Yeltsin's victory in the Russian presidential election, Mr. ['Ali Akbar] Velayati said to our correspondent today: The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes Mr. Yeltsin's victory in the election. The Foreign Minister noted that relations between Iran and Russia have been growing since the downfall of the Soviet Union.

Iran: Turkey Urged To Investigate Border Attack

LD0407162596 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 1 Jul 96 pp 1, 16

[Leading Article: "Why is Turkey Silent?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Turkish government's position concerning the attack by two aggressor Turkish army helicopters against the border village of "Silvana" is still obscure. A serious question concerning this is why the Turkish government is keeping silent and fails to apologize for this incident?

The Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned the Turkish ambassador and while protesting against this act by the Turkish army, pointed out to him that Ankara has to act on four issues in order to demonstrate its goodwill.

1. Make an official apology over the incident.
2. Undertake not to repeat such incidents.
3. Dispatch a team of experts to investigate the dimensions of the incident.
4. Make reparations for the losses incurred and compensate the injured and the relatives of those killed in the incident.

The incident occurred when the tribes in the Silvana area in Orumiyeh [Western Azarbaijan Province] were having their meal. At that point they were fired on by machineguns of aggressor helicopters from the Turkish army. Nevertheless, the Turkish army joint chief of staff headquarters released a short statement to the effect that no operation had been carried out in Iran's territory and the firing had taken place within Turkish territory, against people who intended to penetrate Turkey.

Thus the Turkish army has accepted the actual military operation to have taken place at the time of the incident, but imagines that by merely releasing a statement it can cover up actual and palpable realities and existing evidence and pretend as if no aggression has taken place and the happening has been on the other side of the border, within Turkish territory.

The proposal, offered by the [Iranian] Foreign Ministry, for setting up an expert team to investigate the issue, specifically investigate the evidence locally, is a sober and logical approach to the incident. The problem, however, is that the Turkish government's reluctance in this further complicates the issue and demonstrates that Ankara is apprehensive about any investigation of the matter. The reason is that Ankara is quite aware of the clear results of such an investigation and knows that it is the culprit in this case.

An essential point, meanwhile, is the timing of the incident, which coincides precisely with the vindictive objectives of the global arrogance and Zionism in the region. The incident can even be assessed within the framework of the military agreement between Turkey and Israel and the exploitation of Turkey by Israel. Moreover, let us not forget that the incident occurred on the threshold of the new [Turkish] government to be lead by Erbakan. It seems that covert and over hands have been busy in Turkey to affect Tehran-Ankara ties adversely in any way possible and to disrupt the climate of understanding that exists between the two countries.

All evidence indicates that there is an ominous mission afoot in the Turkish army which specifically has "domestic objectives," seeking to drag the new Erbekan government toward tension with its neighbours from the start and create conditions where Turkish ambassadors to its neighbors are constantly summoned to explain the situations that Turkish army's laic generals create and get Ankara warned about the consequences of such a policy. What boosts the existence of such probabilities is the occurrence of almost similar incidents in Turkey's other borders. They prove that all those incidents are tied to once place and the new Turkish government must vigilantly pursue these issues and adopt clear and decisive measures towards them. It should not allow any subversion and obstructionism against Turkey's relations with its neighbors.

Everyone knows how Islamic Iran confronts aggressors. However, with regard to this issue, the stress is on dealing with this incident with self-restraint. The reason for this stress is crystal clear. The common borders of Iran and Turkey have always been borders of friendship. Moreover, there are firm reasons for wanting these friendly ties to be further consolidated and enhanced. It is precisely for this reason that the incursion of two Turkish military helicopters into Iranian airspace is viewed — albeit with a great degree of surprise and sensitivity — merely as an "incident."

The interests of Turkey and the prerogatives of bilateral ties between the two states dictate that Ankara should reciprocate the wise and logical approach adopted by

Islamic Iran. In other words, instead of issuing short army communiques and repeating one-sided claims, Turkey should investigate the case in order to track all elements seeking to sabotage relations between the two countries. This should be done even if it means that the inquiry might extend into the highest echelons of decision-making in the Turkish army.

The first part of this investigation can begin right inside Turkey. The pilots of the said helicopters would have never carried out this operation without the permission of their superiors. Should they be questioned, they will surely state that they had permission from their superiors to cross international borders and kill civilians or even cattle in the border village of Silvana. They will, furthermore, say that they were only carrying out orders. In that case, perhaps there will not be any need to send a team of experts to Iran, and the new government in Ankara can find work everything out and adopt the appropriate decision.

Hesitation by Ankara to dispatch the team of experts will certainly not be in the interest of relations between the two countries. Such a hesitation, moreover, will facilitate further acts of sabotage by elements who have a mission to disrupt Turkey's relations with its neighbors and entrap the new government in a spiral of "tension with neighbors".

Slow and hesitant reaction by Ankara will merely provide these overt and covert hands with greater opportunities for more extensive acts of sabotage, and will also entice the global arrogance and Zionism to further disrupt Turkey's relations with foreign countries.

Perhaps one can even say that the move by the secular generals of the Turkish army was also aimed at testing [Necmettin] Erbakan's capabilities. Displaying good intentions by the new Turkish government can be seen as Erbakan's first successful maneuver to prove his will and resolve to expand and deepen Turkey's ties with its neighbours. Such an approach, moreover, will tell the notorious elements in Turkey who want to catch fish out of muddy waters to sit quietly and stop their disruptive maneuvers.

Iran: Velayati on G-7 Summit, Dialogue With Europe

LD0407222496 Tehran IRIB Television Second Program Network in Persian 1925 GMT 4 Jul 96

[Interview with Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati by unidentified correspondent on the Political Roundtable program — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Correspondent] Let us first look at the U.S. plot for imposing economic sanctions against Iran. What is its internal dimension?

[Velayati] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Greetings to the honorable viewers. You must be referring to the internal dimension in the United States. I should point out that on the eve of the U.S. presidential elections, all things are dominated by the rivalry between the candidates from the Republican and the Democratic parties. This includes matters relating to foreign affairs. It is unfortunate, as far the American people are concerned, that the foreign interests of the United States become dominated by the presidential election campaign. Many decisions that are taken have nothing to do with the real interests of the American people in the world. According to our accurate information, American companies are not happy about the political decision that the U.S. [government] has taken on the economic sphere. The measure for decision-making in the economic sphere should be economic interests of the U.S. people and companies which are operating around the world. If these interests were to be dominated by the politics of the two parties or dominated by the influential sources as well as covert and overt associations in the United States, such as the Zionist [circles], then the interests of the companies will be overlooked. The wise and learned among the American people, who understand what is taking place, are unhappy about this foreign policy. The business people too, who see their own interests being destroyed by certain associations, such as the Zionist [circles], are unhappy.

[Correspondent] The other aspect of the U.S. action is its international dimension, and of course, all the U.S. efforts have faced defeat. Do you think the U.S. politicians lacked a correct analysis of the situation?

[Velayati] I explained one of the reasons in my previous answer. The rivalry between the two parties is so strong and the motivation to win the presidency is so strong that it makes them blind to the realities of the international arena. Second, it is their arrogance and illusion. There is an illusion of the post-Soviet era that there is a single pole in the world and that the United States is leading all other international powers and all the international games. This defeated illusion remains in the minds of some U.S. statesmen and it is manifested in such behavior. However, the realities of the international arena are something else. I think the more realistic statesmen in the United States have become aware of this fact and are now aware of their mistakes. We have noticed this from the articles that have been published recently in the American quality newspapers, such as THE WASHINGTON POST and THE NEW YORK TIMES.

[Correspondent] We saw that European countries in particular, and industrial states in general, not only did not cooperate with America, but they also disagreed with America. That is they stood against the United States of America. The same is correct in the case of sanctions against trade partners of Libya and Cuba. What is the reason for the European and industrial states to disagree with the White House?

[Velayati] They are after their own interests. Among the seven industrial countries, there are some which are closer to America, such as Canada and Britain. Nevertheless, we saw that even statesmen from those two countries clearly voiced their opposition to the U.S. policies. The reason for that is that the American policy to impose and enforce unilateral sanctions against countries such as Cuba, Iran, and Libya is so unwise that even America's close friends are disagreeing with it. Some countries like France voiced their disagreement even before the session. In an interview before the beginning of the meeting of the seven industrial states in Lyon, the French president, Mr. Chirac, voiced such opposition.

[Correspondent] You have spoken about the G-7 summit in Lyon. What is your evaluation of the summit statement?

[Velayati] As you know the Americans failed to reach their objectives. In fact, the final G-7 statement was the manifestation of the European will. As far as it concerned us, the negative aspects of the statement was less than the statement at the Halifax summit, which was held last year in Canada. We have all witnessed that the United States and Israel, as well as the circles under their influence, have tried very hard against Iran. They pursued irrational and baseless, but nevertheless extensive, propaganda across the world against us. They were hoping that the baseless and false propaganda and accusations would force or convert the G-7 summit. But the Europeans imposed — or rationalized — their own view and the spirit of the statement was nothing but what they call critical dialogue with Iran. The United States tried to make the Europeans end their dialogue with Iran on the grounds that the dialogue was fruitless. The Europeans said the dialogue was useful. The United States wanted an end to the dialogue, the Europeans joining the U.S. sanctions, and internationalization of the sanctions. But the Europeans did not want to join the sanctions and they wanted to prove that the critical dialogue was useful. The outcome of the G-7 summit confirms that the policy of critical dialogue has now expanded, because only four of the seven countries are European — Canada, Japan, and the United States are not European. The final statement on international cooperation was the very spirit of the European philosophy on relations with Iran. The Europeans won on both points against the United States. Japan and Canada too joined Europe and the United States gained nothing from its enmity.

[Correspondent] Let us have a look at the region. We saw the Arab summit — perhaps the most important regional event in the past few weeks — which was convened after the election of the new Zionist regime prime minister. How do you assess the final Arab summit statement?

[Velayati] What happened in the region was the logical sequence of the recent regional developments. On the one hand, in Lebanon, the Israelis were defeated in their aggression. That was the main factor in the Labor Party's defeat in Israel. The new party which succeeded to power in effect revealed the naked policies of the Israeli policies. That is, what the Labor Party was pursuing was the same recognized Zionist policy dressed in peaceful clothing. The Islamic Republic of Iran was opposed to the so-called peace plan from the start. The Americans and the Israeli agents in various parts of the world exerted all-round pressure on us to accept the peace plan but we didn't. We opposed it.

Following the recent events in the region — southern Lebanon and the Israeli elections — in fact those who had banked on the mirage of peace in the region realized their mistake and for the first time in six years Arab leaders met in Cairo. In their meeting, they acted in such a way as if the Oslo declaration had not been signed by 'Arafat and Israel or that the Madrid conference had never taken place. In fact it set back by many years those who believed in peace with the Palestine occupier-regime and made them more realistic. Today the prevalent standpoint in the Arab world is much nearer to what we used to believe than it was a year or two years ago. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Was the military agreement signed between the Zionist regime and Turkey discussed in your talks with the Syrian foreign minister [in Tehran recently]?

[Velayati] This has been an important issue of discussion in our talks with officials from Turkey and other regional countries. It continues to be an important regional issue. There is no doubt that the signing of the agreement between Turkey and Israel did not serve the Turkish image in the Islamic world because of the fact that Israel is the recognized enemy of the Islamic world. The recent elections in Israel have proved this point even further. As an important Islamic country with a Muslim population and a great role in Islamic history, Turkey is expected to consider the interests of the Islamic world. We have referred to these points in our discussions with Turkish officials. Even Egypt sent its foreign minister and expressed its dissatisfaction. Syria reacted in similar fashion. In the mini Arab summit in Damascus a similar concern was expressed. This was also expressed in the final statement of the Arab summit. [passage omitted]

Iran: After G-7 Summit Iran Target of New Round of Propaganda

LD0407170496 Tehran RESALAT in Persian
30 Jun pp 1, 16

[Article by Heshmatollah Falahat-Pisheh: "G-7, The Lost Identity"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Last Thursday, on the fringes of the 22nd Lyon session, Valerie Giscard d'Estaing — the former French president, who 21 years ago in 1975, organized the first G-7 summit — said: By adopting strong political tendencies the G-7 summit is moving away from its useful function and becoming a showpiece which is put on every year.

America, Canada, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan are the G-7 members. Since those economic powers have monopolized a large portion of the world's trade, wealth, investment, and production, they discuss the most important global economic issues and economic developments in their annual sessions.

But now, that 21-year old family is so influenced by the political wishes of certain members that its has lost its original identity and, in accordance with certain political expediencies, its identity is unstable and changing every year. Nevertheless one can view G-7's actions from two standpoints, economic and political.

1. From an economic standpoint, which has been defined as the main function of G-7, the members have striven to maintain the north-south divide, while the gap between the rich and the poor in the world and also in the seven countries is widening.

2. Contrary to G-7's articles of association, political issues are the most important issues on the group's agenda. America has constantly played the biggest role in politicizing the group, so that all the members and issues have been upstaged by its national wishes, interests and security. The Lyon summit, on the eve of the U.S. presidential election, has even been influenced by Clinton's election campaign. America's attempts to organize and steer the summit's agenda, in the past few days at the summit, has made the summit selective in its dealings with political issues. The propaganda by the American delegation about terrorism and the policy of sanctions have overshadowed important issues such as the expansion of NATO; Russia's situation and the threat of communism; the fate of Bosnia and the trial of war criminals; organized crime and UN reforms. In the last summit, by targeting Iran, Clinton placed the issue of the proliferation of nuclear arms on the agenda, but there is no mention of it now. Because with the coming to light of the falsity of the allegations against Iran and the raising of the issue of the threat of the Zionist regime's nuclear power by G- 7's non-American members, Tel Aviv and America's Middle East were threatened.

On the other hand, Clinton is trying to take advantage of the biggest bomb explosion in the history of Saudi Arabia and link the two issues with each other — terrorism and economic embargo — while both policies have false foundations.

During the explosion, which occurred last week, 19 American soldiers were killed and hundreds of them were wounded.

The main target of the two assault spearheads [terrorism and economic embargo] is Islamic Iran. The explosion in Dhahran is another example of internal anger against the presence of foreigners in the region. While there is no evidence of Iran's involvement in the explosion, the interesting thing is that Iran has become the target of a new round of so-called antiterrorist propaganda. This is at a time when the Iranian nation is mourning the death anniversary of the assassination and martyrdom of the great revolutionary martyred Beheshti and 72 of his colleages.

The policy of economic embargo is also facing defeat because of obstacles created by other Western countries. Europe considers as a shot fired at friends the bill approved by the U.S. Congress against Iran, Libya, and Cuba. All members of the G-7 have criticized the U.S. measure. However, Clinton has rejected using the Dhahran explosion as a winning card to convince other members in order to pursue his main policy on the embargo [as published]. These two odd patches will not match. The policy of embargo means interfering in the international trade regulations, and what has happened in Dhahran is a real demand by people rejecting foreign interference. In both cases the United States is accused, and therefore, deserves to be defeated in its economic embargo and punished for its interference.

Iran Calls For Investment To Fight Drugs in Afghanistan

LD0307194696 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 25 Jun 96 p 1, 13

["Iran Calls For Antidrug Finance in Afghanistan"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran — Iran has asked the world for financial investment in a campaign designed to replace Afghanistan's drug cultivation with viable farming, according to Anti-Narcotics Headquarters Secretary, Mohammad Fallah, Saturday.

Fallah and the Anti-Narcotics Headquarters International Relations Director General Qodratullah Assadi spoke exclusively to 'Iran News' about Afghanistan's current financial dependence on the poppy and Iran's difficulty in securing the eastern border from smugglers.

"For several years, we have called on international organizations and representatives of other countries to visit Iran to see the country's anti-narcotics measures," Assadi said.

"So far, UN Deputy Secretary General in Narcotics Affairs, Giorgio Giacomelli, has inspected Iran's programmes along the country's eastern borders," he pointed out.

"The UN has pledged to donate 3,700,000 dollars for programmes based on the Iran-Pakistan agreement to cooperate to fortify the borders against smuggling." In line with this programme, 20 Iranian border posts and 20 Pakistani border posts exchange information.

"UN facilities are at our disposal to fight drug abuse," Assadi maintained.

"Despite its claims that it is countering smuggling, the US from the outset tried to sabotage Iran's anti-narcotics measures. For instance, the US created many barriers along the way to delivery to Iran of UN facilities purchased from Australia," Assadi said.

"The US furthermore, blocked Iran's purchased items in Frankfurt Airport for a long period of time".

Despite US sabotage, the project to facilitate border posts from Iran to Turkmenistan will be implemented in collaboration with the UN.

Iran will also set up an educational centre to train the region's disciplinary forces in Tehran. The UN is to undertake the expenses for this project, he explained.

"Irrespective of Iran's measures, massive expenditures, and offer of many martyrs to combat drug abuse, we have not as yet been able to attain a high degree of success in the anti-narcotics campaign, as the main problem lies beyond Iran's eastern borders.

"Iran is, therefore, seeking an alternative agricultural product for Afghanistan. Last year, Iran officially declared its readiness to the UN to offer donations to Afghanistan," he said.

"In Afghanistan, this project will be implemented in collaboration with the heads of the Jihadi (combatant) groups and the Afghan government."

"Based on this plan, Iran will purchase Afghanistan's agricultural products at prices higher than global rates, a measure that can overshadow the benefits accrued from drug deals," he stated.

"To this end, the Committee of the Substitute Cultivation is studying executive ways and means of enforcing this plan," he said.

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Meanwhile, Fallah maintained that the dependence of some Wahhabi ulema on the US caused some of them to "consider narcotics a permissible trade. But the Afghans are not Wahhabis, while some US- inspired Wahhabi elements boost the idea," he said.

A symposium held last week in Isfahan was aimed at surveying the strengths and weaknesses of the prevention and rehabilitation programmes for the drug addicts.

"This programme has been devised by the Ministry of Health, Treatment, and Medical Education," he said.

"For this purpose, a group named Unknown (former) Addicts has been set up to encourage the addicts to get rid of addiction."

On the Headquarters' cultural activities to combat addiction, he said that last year the Headquarters' Secretariat set up 11 commissions with the help of 140 specials.

"These commissions have to present executive solutions. For instance, the Publicity and Prevention Commission at the schools is vested with the duty of making the hazards of narcotics known to students," he said.

There is a global Anti-Narcotics Day (26 June), and Fallah said that on the occasion "the Headquarters will hold programmes to destroy narcotics in Tehran to show its readiness to the world to combat the drug menace and bar the transit route of narcotics to Europe.

Iran: Egyptian Academic, Journalist Comment on Rapprochement

NC0407194296

[FBIS Report] Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic at 1730 GMT on 4 July carries on its "News and Reports" program recorded telephone interviews with two Egyptian personalities, Dr. Majdi Za'bal, an official of the Cairo Political Studies Center; and 'Abd-al-'Al al-Baquri, chief editor of the Egyptian leftist newspaper AL-AHALI. They are both asked to comment on the prospects of rapprochement between Iran and Egypt. The date of the interviews, conducted by Tehran Radio staffer 'Isam Hasan, is not given.

During his 4-minute interview Za'bal is asked to comment on a remark by Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' following his meeting with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Cairo on 4 July that he sensed in the latter a "desire to improve ties with Iran."

Za'bal says that Egypt views these ties from a strategic perspective and that Iran as an Islamic country represents a strategic depth for pan-Arab security. He says he supports the attempts to improve relations between Tehran and Cairo and views them as a bulwark against "the Zionist entity's wish to exercise greater hegemony and to assume a regional role that is beyond its capabilities and resources, a role that threatens the Arab nation's independence and existence."

He give thanks for "revolutionary Iran's numerous contributions to Islam and the Palestinian cause."

He concludes by saying that strong ties between Egypt, Syria, and Iran will help to "halt this barbaric onslaught represented by Israel—the Zionist entity—and its U.S. supporters."

In a 3-minute interview, AL-AHALI chief editor 'Abd-al-'Al al- Baquri says he hopes that the rapprochement between Egypt and Iran will be real and permanent and not a passing phase.

Declaring that Egypt and Iran have a lot of things in common, he says: "Doubtless any estrangement or disagreement between Iran and Egypt will affect the entire region. Both of them need the other to establish strong and stable relations in the region as a whole. Egypt, in its relations with Iran, is not only seeking to promote Egyptian interests alone but also seeks to fulfill its influential pan-Arab role."

Iran: U.S. Leaders Said To See Iran Behind All Plots Against Them

LD0407210896 Tehran SALAM in Persian 30 Jun 96 p 12

[News Report by Naqi Aqalu: "Escape from the Reality"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At a time when Bill Clinton was using all his energy and efforts to convince the heads of the six Western industrial states to take a joint stance against Iran, Cuba, and Libya at a session in Lyon, France, he was informed of the shocking news about an explosion at a U.S. military base in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Panicking, he looked around him to share his worries with his colleagues and to assess the level of their sympathy by studying the changes in their expressions and by staring into their eyes, which possibly were showing signs of distress. [passage omitted noting that Clinton gave a news conference calling the incident a terrorist act]

The day after the incident, he [Clinton] urged the heads of industrial countries to adopt a joint stance against terrorism, but leaders of the European countries were wise enough not to be influenced by the U.S. conclusions. European leaders did not accept the U.S. proposals which amounted to a kind of escaping from reality. [passage omitted quoting Chirac's comments and saying that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the Israeli president accused Iran of involvement in the explosion]

America's interpretation of similar recent events and those before them indicate some kind of escaping from realities, and that is a trap into which American officials have fallen. There is a conspiracy theory to which some domestic elements subscribe, thinking that the roots of all problems and unforeseen incidents should be found outside Iranian borders. They link those events to a cohesive global secret entity. For a number of years now American officials and statesmen have also subscribed to a similar conspiracy theory. Assessing their judgements during the last few years, one can see that they [American officials] believe that the roots of all plots against them and their supporters should be found in Iran!

Can the volume and the extent of the U.S. economic, political, military, and information interests in the region, particularly in Saudi Arabia, and the fear that they may lose such huge interests which are linked to petrodollars, on their own justify the actions and conclusions made by the Americans? And can one expect from Arabs, particularly the government of Saudi Arabia, to adopt independent policies, such as those adopted by the Europeans, toward incidents such as the Dhahran explosion and their political and trade ties with Iran?

Iran: Commentary—Central Asian States Cannot Prosper Without Peace

LD0407171296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 4 Jul 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati on Wednesday 3 July, met with Turkmen President Mr. Saparmyrat Niyazov in Ashgabat.

Mr. Velayati, who is on a visit to Ashgabat to take part in the fifth trilateral Iran, Turkmenistan, and Armenia session before taking part in a meeting with the Turkmen president, submitted the message of the Islamic Republic of Iran's president to Mr. Niyazov and discussed bilateral and regional issues.

The sides in the meeting called the prospectives of their trilateral cooperation in the region hopeful, pointing out that cooperations have entered a new phase.

The Islamic Republic of Iran considers the expansion of trilateral cooperation as very significant, and this issue is one of the priorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign policy.

Iran believes that the expansion of multilateral cooperations at the present stage will have an important role in the economic growth as well as the elevation of regional and international peace, stability and security.

Each of the regional countries, possessing existing and potential facilities in various fields, can play a significant role in the expansion of economic communication, as well as the ever-growing living standards of the people of the region.

One must mention that reaching such an important issue is impossible without the establishment of security and stability in the region. The Islamic Republic of Iran, in this regard, has started peace-seeking efforts to end regional crises, and these efforts have had positive results up to date.

Regarding these points, the Islamic Republic of Iran's foreign minister, in his meeting with the Turkmen president, has welcomed the holding of a new round of talks in the near future between the government and the opponents of the Tajik Government [as heard]. Turkmenistan, too, has made many efforts in this regard. According to experts of political issues, the cooperation and consultation of regional countries is a very useful and suitable method for ending the regional crises.

As a whole, it can be said that taking any step for bringing closer the regional countries' relations, including the formation of trilateral sessions, indicates this reality that such cooperations not only help the expansion of multilateral ties, but also have a significant role in providing stability and the establishment of a lasting peace between regional countries.

Iran: Daily—More 'Trouble Brewing' for Saudi Regime

LD0407103196 Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 30 Jun 96 p 2

[Commentary by "Yousef Gh. Gharavi": "Trouble Brewing for Al Sauds"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The recent bombing of a U.S. military base in Saudi Arabia which left at least 19 Americans dead and hundreds injured is a clear indication of the trouble brewing for the ruling family.

It is an established fact that the major opposition to the Al- Sauds in their 60-year-long monopolistic rule has come from the religious section rather than political figures.

It may be recalled that the Ikhwan-al-Tawhid who were the backbone of 'Abd-al-'Aziz's army, later on constituted the main opposition to the Al-Saud regime. In fact, the Ikhwan has accused 'Abd-al-'Aziz of ignoring the principles of Islam and developing close relations with the Western countries.

Although, Bin-Sa'ud was able to defeat the Ikhwan with the direct support of British air power, however, the essence of the religious opposition developed during the decades old Al-Saud rule.

Basically, the historical events in Mecca in 1979 were engineered by the remaining personalities of the Ikhwan who pointed out that the Saudi regime is deviating from the main principles of Islam and fellow Muslims are obliged to get rid of such a regime which chose to provide shelter to unbelievers in the holy land of Islam.

As a matter of fact, the strong and unabated opposition to foreign presence in the Arab desert, remain the main force for religious and political groups working inside and outside of the country.

During the Persian Gulf war which helped liberate Kuwait, there was reportedly several skirmishes and open disputes in many cities in Saudi Arabia between the ordinary citizens and American soldiers, who were called to restore the former status quo in the Persian Gulf region.

Of significance is the comeback of hundreds of Saudi youth who took part in the Jihad in Afghanistan and returned home after the Mojahedin takeover in Kabul in 1992. These youths who devoted their life to the new era of Islamization in the Muslim world, refused to accept the western-oriented foreign relations of the ruling regime.

The sense of failure and frustration of the youth coupled with the already tense situation among religious as well as academic circles in universities and religious centres, posed a formidable and serious challenge to the political establishment.

The failure of the ruling regime to address the main demands of the opposition groups, particularly to widen the scope of their political participation and break the level of close relations between Riyadh and western capitals, prompted the opposition to take a tough and militant stance against the presence of foreign troops on their land.

The fact is the foreign military presence in the Arab desert has always been welcomed by Tel Aviv which seeks to extend its military and political reach across the Middle East.

And, there is nothing surprising about the recent accusations leveled by Zionist circles against Islamic Iran.

In fact Iran itself was a victim of terrorist acts in the past two decades and those who were behind them now enjoy full support in Tel Aviv and in other western capitals.

Iran: 'Terrorist' Group Arrested in Mazandaran

LD0307183496 Tehran IRNA in English
1816 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sari (Mazandaran), July 3, IRNA — A terrorist group was tracked down and arrested in the Caspian province of Mazandaran last month, director general of the provincial information department said here on Wednesday. He said the group had a mission to plant bombs, carry out sabotage and indulge in vandalism in the provincial cities. He said that thanks to public vigilance, the country's ever-alert information and security forces have foiled many acts of sabotage and subversive operations of the elements of world arrogance in Iran.

The official appreciated the cooperation of Mazandarani people with his department in detecting the terrorists.

Iran: Rafsanjani Inaugurates Tunnel at Barzu Dam

LD0407205396 Tehran IRNA in English
1613 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bojnurd, Khorasan Prov., July 4, IRNA — "Dam construction program should continue to control surface waters", President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani said in his inauguration address at the ribbon cutting ceremony of the diversion tunnel of Barzu Dam in this northeastern border province, on Thursday. He said that building dams costs the government no foreign exchange, and the capital invested is recoverable in the short run.

According to experts, completion of Barzu Dam in the city of Shirvan will turn the northern region of the province into an agricultural pole. Beside providing potable water for Shirvan, the dam will furnish water for some 5000 hectares of the regional arable lands. Building of the diversion tunnel of the dam, cost some rls 4.500 billion, while the construction project of its main wall is expected to run around some rls 35 billion in budget allocation.

In related news on Thursday, ground was was picked in the presence of the president for construction of Shirin Dareh Reservoir Dam, near Bojnurd. The dam is intended to expand regional agricultural activities, control flood waters and prevent land erosion of the arable land on the river banks. The reservoir is built on a clay core, with an annual reserve capacity of 60 million cubic meters of water. Some rls 40 billion has been allocated to complete the dam including the related water diversion system.

Iran: President Urges Investment in Aluminum Industry

LD0407202596 Tehran IRNA in English
1853 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jajarm, Khorasan Prov., July 4, IRNA — President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani saw the need for the completion of the Jajarm aluminium factory after inspecting the mine and factory facilities here Thursday. The Iranian president pointed out that since bauxite fetched high price in the international market, it was essential that investment be made in the aluminium industry as it was economical due to cheap energy supply and rich deposits of this mineral in the country.

The hojjat ol-eslam also stated that once the project was completed, it would create job opportunities to eliminate poverty in this deprived area. Rafsanjani finally promised to provide the needed financial assistance for the completion of the factory.

Iran: President Rafsanjani Views Environmental Issues

LD0407200096 Tehran IRNA in English
1940 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kolaleh, Mazandaran Prov., July 4, IRNA — Iran's President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani arrived here Thursday on his return trip to Tehran from north-eastern parts of Khorasan Province of Iran, and in a meeting with provincials officials reviewed environment protection issues of the province.

In the meeting that was also attended by head of the Environment Protection Organization of Iran Dr Hadi Manafi, President Rafsanjani stressed the need to comply with health and environment protection principles at recreational centers in the province. The president also reminded the need for building proper physical facilities at which to say daily prayers by many of the travellers who pass through the province on their return trip from neighboring Khorasan Province of Iran that houses the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad.

President Rafsanjani also addressed himself to the media in Iran calling on them to concentrate more on the importance of public health principles at natural recreational parks as well as protection of the environment and dwell more meaningfully on that topic.

Iran: Rafsanjani Inaugurates Road Link in Northeast

LD0307223296 Tehran IRNA in English
2036 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bojnurd (Khorasan), July 3, IRNA — In the presence of President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the second phase of the regional link road in northeastern Iran was inaugurated on Wednesday, connecting the city of Bojnurd to the town of Hokmabad. The 125-km road which stretches to the Sabzevan-Ferdows-Kerman highway, will facilitate movement of goods between the northeastern cities and the southern ports of the country. In his inaugural address, the president noted that before the laying of this road, Bojnurd city was virtually a deadend in the region, while now it will be transformed turned into a major point on communicational high way.

In related news on Wednesday, ground was picked in the presence of the president for construction of a reservoir dam and irrigational in Bidvaz, 20 km northeast of Esfarayen city. The dam is designed to irragate 5,100 hectares of farmlands. It will also provide healthy drinking water for the city of esfarayen, control seasonal floods, and prevent the inundation of arable lands and river banks. The Bidvaz dam will rise 104 meters from the river bed and 66 meters above the surface, while its breadth will be 8 meters wide. The earthen dam is exected to cost rls 39 billion for completion.

Iran: President Inaugurates Petrochemical Complex in Khorasan

LD0307214096 Tehran IRIB Television Third Program Network in Persian 1815 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The giant petrochemical complex of Khorasan, 17 kilometers from Bojnurd in the northeastern province of Khorasan, was inaugurated in the presence of President Hashemi- Rafsanjani on 3 July.

The complex has the capacity of producing 330,000 tonnes of ammonia and 500,000 tonnes of urea fertilizer.

The complex, completed at a cost of 1 trillion rials, makes Iran self sufficient in the urea chemical fertilizers and saves Iran some $120 million annually. The project will also create jobs, provide technical training opportunities and transfer of technology and render assistance to other industries.

Meanwhile, simultaneous with the arrival in Bojnurd of President Rafsanjani, the city's airport was officially inaugurated. The airport will accommodate two weekly flights to Tehran and the provincial capital of Mashhad.

Iran: Admiral Cited on 'Falaq' Maneuvers, Regional Cooperation

LD0407101396 Tehran IRNA in English
0659 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, July 4, IRNA — Rear Admiral Mohammad Karim Tavakoli said that the recent Falaq missile war games in the Persian Gulf were aimed at testing ways of coping with emergency situations and defense capabilities.

In an interview with the English [language] daily 'IRAN NEWS' Thursday, he noted that the naval forces took part in the games to improve their defensive capabilities and enhance their military muscle.

"The maneuvers enable us to eradicate any problems gripping the navy through better understanding of the shortcomings," he added.

Notwithstanding embargoes, economic restrictions and ban on the sale of needed parts to Iran, the Islamic Republic navy has safeguarded the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, Tavakoli stressed.

He further underlined that those who wished to eliminate the navy from the Islamic Republic's armed forces failed in their attempts, and right now the navy is more powerful than ever before.

As to presence of foreign forces in the Persian Gulf, he stated that the foreign forces have caused mounting insecurity and tension in the area.

Voicing the Iranian navy's readiness to cooperate with interested regional countries in maintaining security in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, Tavakoli reiterated that the navy can offer any kind of assistance required by these regional states.

Iran: Rail Link to Turkmenistan Reported

96LH0212A Tehran IRAN NEWS in Persian
30 Apr 96 p 13

[FBIS Translated Text] Economics Group—Next Monday the Mashhad-Sarakhs rail line will go into experimental operation at a finished cost of 320 billion rials [R].

Iran's mobile correspondent reports that this 167 km railroad in seven sections branches off toward Sarakhs at the Sang Bast station on the Mashhad-Tehran line and crosses the border into Turkmenistan at the Tedzhen river.

In an interview with IRNA's mobile correspondent, Engineer Mohammad Hadi-Torbati, chief of the Qet'eh-ye Panj Alef Factory and one of the mangers of the National Construction Company affiliated with the Foundation for the Oppressed and War Veterans, said that "96 km of this line is in desert, 29 km is on high ground, and 42 km crosses difficult mountain terrain along which 3 tunnels totaling about 6 km in length were dug."

The first tunnel in section four is 2,312 meters; the other two tunnels were built in section five in lengths of 2,605 and 1,012 meters.

He added: Along the length of this line, eight stations and 2,700 meters of bridges were built, including 15 large valley bridges and 286 small and average-size bridges. A train can travel this line at a speed of more than 120 kilometers.

Based on this report, with the construction of three tunnels in the mountainous and difficult areas, Iran has for the first time acquired the knowledge to build large tunnels.

Eng. Torbati said: This rail line, which was built at one-fourth the cost proposed by foreign companies, went into operation 18 months sooner than the target date, and its construction cost 50 percent of the ceiling figure.

He said the major problems with the construction of the tunnel were the negative grade, the presence of water, and the long length of the route. He said: The Mashhad Sarakhs railroad was built according to the highest international standards.

Based on another report from IRNA, the first phase of operations from the special Sarakhs economic, trade, and industrial zone in the first phase at Sarakhs International Airport will begin on 20 Ordibehesht [10 May].

In an interview with reporters, Naser Va'ez-Tabasi, chairman of the Board of Directors and supervisor of the Sarakhs special economic zone, said: The International Silk Complex at Sarakhs has 18,000 square meters of area.

He added: The final project is the Sarakhs Airport. This airport is a freight airport with the resources for shipping 400,000 tons of goods. In the initial phase of its operation, this airport will have the capability of moving 120,000 tons of goods per year.

He continued: The final project in this zone is the creation of a new city which can be used by merchants and the people from the countries that trade along the Mashhad - Sarakhs rail line.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Leghari Speaks on NPT, CTBT, Kashmir

BK0307135996 Islamabad PTV Television Network
in English 1300 GMT 3 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has said Pakistan will not sign the NPT [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty] unilaterally. It can do so simultaneously with India. Addressing the 20th convocation of the National Defense College in Islamabad today, he said Pakistan will support international agreements for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT]. He said Pakistan has managed to convince the United States that it is neither fair nor feasible to ask Pakistan to roll back its nuclear program and it will not accept unilateral and one-sided restrictions and obligations on its nuclear program. The president said Pakistan's signature and adherence to the CTBT would depend on our confidence that all nuclear capable states would join the treaty.

President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari said the ongoing tension with India is fraught with dangers of escalation. But Pakistan is prepared to continue dialogue with its neighbors. He said Kashmir continues to be a disputed territory and cannot be dismissed as a settled issue. Pakistan is prepared to continue bilateral dialogue with India on the Kashmir dispute and resolve other differences between the two countries. The president expressed satisfaction that slowly but surely democratic institutions are taking firm roots in the country.

[Begin Leghari recording] The press remains free and the judiciary fiercely independent. The recent promulgation of the Legal Reforms Ordinance is a landmark event in the separation of the judiciary from the executive. The situation in Karachi and urban Sindh has transformed with the government's success in breaking the back of the terrorist organizations. The stage is now set to enter into meaningful dialogues for a political settlement. This period of 1995-96 also saw massive foreign, private sector investment taking place in Pakistan, principally in the energy field. [end recording]

The president spoke on budgetary constraints and stressed the need for a total overhaul of tax collection machinery, documentation of economy, and modernization of tax system.

[Begin Leghari recording] The tax collection machinery needs a total overhaul. The structure of taxes must be changed to achieve at least unitary elasticity. Despite heavy additional taxation almost annually over the last decade, the tax to GDP ratio has remained more or less static at around 13 percent. We require expansion in the tax basis, plugging of loopholes, better tax administration, lowering of statutory rates, documentation of the economy, and other steps to modernize the tax system. [end recording]

Earlier, in his welcome address, the commandant of the college, Lieutenant General Mohammad Maqbul, said the college is imparting training in the higher aspects of national defense to senior civil and military officers. The president awarded master's degrees to the successful participants of the national defense war courses. Officers of some friendly countries also attended these courses.

Pakistan: Bhutto Says No 'Compromise' on Nuclear Program

BK0407042496 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said Pakistan will not accept hegemony of any country and it is ready to enter into talks with India on Kashmir, nuclear, missile, and other issues without compromising its sovereignty. She was addressing a big public meeting at (Kakri) ground in Layari area of Karachi last night. The meeting was arranged in connection with the celebrations marking successful completion of Layari water supply scheme at a cost of 400 million rupees. The prime minister said Pakistan will never compromise on its peaceful nuclear program and if it is threatened with Prithvi missiles, it will not sit silent. She said the defense of the country is getting top priority of her government.

The prime minister declared that Pakistan would continue to support Kashmiri people in their just struggle against Indian forces and the day was not far off when they would get freedom. The prime minister referred to the elections held recently in occupied Kashmir and in Azad Kashmir and said at one place these elections were just and it were a farce in the other place. She said in Azad Kashmir, the elections were conducted by an election commission appointed by the AJK [Azad Jammu and Kashmir] prime minister, Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Khan, who belongs to Muslim Conference. The people cast their votes with all freedom and without any fear. She referred to the elections in occupied Kashmir and said these were held in the territory where federal rule was imposed and Hurriyat Conference was not allowed to play its role. People in occupied Kashmir were forcibly taken out of their homes by the Indian Army asking them to cast their votes and they were threatened that their thumbs would be cut off if they did not carry the ink mark.

Turning to the commitment made by her government for the well- being of the people of every part of the country, the prime minister referred to the Karachi package of 121 billion rupees and said they were making all efforts to provide basic amenities to the people. She said she was happy to see the completion of Layari water supply scheme and saluted the people of Layari for their staunch support to the PPP [Pakistan People's Party].

The prime minister regretted that certain elements wanted to divide people on ethnic basis and said her government had foiled the conspiracy of terrorists to make Karachi their hostage. She said her government will not allow violence against poor and innocent people and it is committed to protect them against terrorists. She said she will welcome the return of Altaf Hussain [president of Muhajir Qaumi Movement] to the country as a peaceful citizen.

Earlier the Sindh chief minister, Syed Abdullah Shah, in his speech said Layari area was getting step motherly treatment in the past. They were now trying to rectify the situation and bring backward areas at par with the rest of the country.

Pakistan: Spokesman—U.S. Admits Approach on Nuclear Issue 'Mistaken'

BK0407145896 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The United States and Pakistan are in touch for the release of arms and equipment under the Brown Amendment and there was no hitch in their shipment. A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad today that the process for the release of military equipment is on and necessary documents have been exchanged. United States and Pakistan have been in touch over the nuclear issue for a long time and Washington was persuaded that they had adopted a mistaken approach on the issue. He said such talks will continue in future.

About Afghanistan, the spokesman said the taking over Mr. Golboddin Hekmatyar as prime minister in Kabul has the possibilities of promoting eventual peace there. About Mr. Hekmatyar's appeal for supply of goods to Kabul, he said Pakistan is prepared to consider arrangements for purchase of goods at official level by Afghanistan or such [word indistinct] in Afghanistan purchase their items from Pakistan. There is no problem about transport because there are no longer any road blocks on Jalalabad-Kabul highway.

The spokesman said Pakistan is preparing a reply to the Indian prime minister, Mr. Deve Gowda's letter to Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto about resumption of talks between the two countries.

Pakistan: Bhutto—Country Seeks Peace in Afghanistan

LD0407165196 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At a meeting with Dr. Ghayrat Bahir, special envoy of [Afghan Prime Minister] Brother Hekmatyar, Mrs Benazir Bhutto, prime minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, said: We hope that the recent developments in Afghanistan will benefit the consolidation of peace and security in this country.

Mrs Bhutto said that Pakistan has no favorite group in Afghanistan and wants to have good relations with all. Pakistan is ready to play an unbiased role for the strengthening of peace.

Pakistan, as it supported the Afghans in their jihad, is once again ready to support the Afghans in restoring peace and reconstructing their country. She said that the restoration of peace in Afghanistan is very important for regional stability. It is necessary that regional countries should pay attention to this point.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Minister Escapes Assassination Attempt, Officer Dead

BK0407080696 Hong Kong AFP in English 0756 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, July 4 (AFP) — A senior minister escaped assassination when a Tamil Tiger suicide bomber rammed into his vehicle in northern Sri Lanka Thursday [4 July] but a senior military commander was killed in the attack, officials said.

A man strapped with explosives set off the bomb in the town of Jaffna as Housing Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva, 51, drove in from the nearby military base of Palaly, officials said. "A brigadier escorting the minister was killed," a military spokesman here said. "But the minister and six others escaped with injuries. They are out of danger."

De Silva had been appointed by President Chandrika Kumaratunga to organise rehabilitation work in the peninsula of Jaffna which was wrested from Tamil Tiger control after a series of operations was launched in October.

However, military commanders told journalists who visited the area last month that several hundred Tiger infiltrators were still believed to be holed up in the region.

Thursday's assassination bid on de Silva is the first major attack against a senior politician in Jaffna in recent times.

Sri Lanka: Spokesman Says 21 Killed in Attempt To Kill Minister

BK0407112196 Hong Kong AFP in English 1103 GMT 4 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, July 4 (AFP) — A Tamil woman suicide bomber wounded Sri Lanka's housing minister and killed at least 21 other people, including a top military commander in the northern town of Jaffna Thursday [4 July], a military spokesman said.

A woman fighter of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] strapped with explosives blew herself up as Housing Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva came onto the road in Jaffna, spokesman Sarath Munasinghe said.

"The minister escaped with minor injuries," Munasinghe told AFP. "I have the names of 11 people killed. In addition to that we also have the bodies of 10 other civilians. More than 50 were wounded."

Munasinghe said it was not immediately clear if the minister and his officials had already got into their vehicles when the attack came but initial reports suggested that one or two women bombers were involved.

The head of one suicide bomber was found near the blast site at Stanley Road in Jaffna close to a buildings material store inaugurated by the minister earlier in the day.

De Silva suffered a head injury and was described as a "walking wounded' by the army.

The minister and several officials wounded in the attack were being flown to the capital Colombo, 400 kilometers (250 miles) south of Jaffna, officials said.

Sri Lanka: Suicide Bomber's Attempt on Minister's Life Detailed

BK0407162496 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 5 Jul 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Housing, Construction and Public Utilities Minister Nimal Siripala de Silva narrowly escaped death in Jaffna yesterday [4 Jul] when a woman suicide bomber crashed into a convoy in which the Minister was travelling.

Official reports said Brigadier Ananda Hamangoda and 20 others (4 soldiers, three policemen and eleven civilians) were killed in the impact at Stanley Road, Jaffna at around 12.45 pm. The dead civilians include the Chairman, Cement Corporation Mr. R. Godamuna and BMC [expansion unknown] official Mr. A.A. Dissanayake.

Captain C.D.P.K. Colombage of the Sri Lanka Military Police, Mr. Carlyle Dias, retired SSP [Senior Superintendent of Police] attached to NPRRA [expansion unknown] and Police Constable Banda the Minister's security officer were also killed in the attack.

Others who died in the incident are Corporal Banda of the Sri Lanka Military Police, Private Seneviratne, Private Pusila Kumara, Private Gunawardena and an unidentified police constable.

Over fifty others were also injured in the incident which occurred shortly after Minister de Silva was leaving the Stanley Road venue where he declared opened the Building Materials Corporation outlet as part of the reconstruction drive now in progress in the North.

Reports said that the Minister who suffered injuries to his forehead was airlifted to the Palaly Base Hospital for emergency treatment. He has since been transferred to Colombo.

The Minister, who is the Chairman of the Presidential Task Force on Northern Rehabilitation, was on one of his visits to the North to supervise the on-going projects.

Over the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, the Minister was quoted as saying at a military complex that the attack would not deter him from visiting Jaffna again.

The blast went off as he got into his car, he said.

Sri Lanka: Housing Minister 'Undeterred' by Assassination Attempt

BK0507114896 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A woman suicide bomber yesterday narrowly failed to assassinate the housing minister in charge of rebuilding Jaffna, but 21 others were killed. Officials said that a woman fighter of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] strapped with explosives blew herself apart as Housing Minister Nimal Sripala de Silva came on to the road in Jaffna. The minister escaped with minor injuries. More than 50 were wounded. Officials say that it was not immediately clear if the minister and his officers had already got into their vehicles when the attack came. But initial reports suggest that one or two women suicide bombers were involved.

The head of one suicide bomber was found near the blast site at Stanley Road in Jaffna close to a building materials store inaugurated by the minister earlier in the day. Several officers and Army personnel were killed in the explosion. Among those dead was the top military commander of Jaffna town, Brigadier Ananda Hamangoda, who was escorting the minister during his 13th visit to Jaffna since security forces wrested control over the region recently.

Brig. Ananda Hamangoda, who sacrificed his life in the bomb attack had joined the Army as a cadet officer in 1970. He has rendered an active part in three major orations launched against the LTTE. Brig. Hamangoda who was involved in the Riviresa military operation had actively engaged in rehabilitation activities in the north at the time of his death.

Minister Nimal Sripala de Silva was appointed by the president to lead the government's ambitious program to rehabilitate Jaffna peninsula. "I am not scared to go to Jaffna. I will do my duty toward the people of the North even if my life is threatened," de Silva said at a meeting in the northern town of Vavuniya where he announced his Jaffna visit. He was to implement a $274 million plan to rebuild the peninsula initiated by the president. The minister told the SLBC Palali service that he was undeterred by the assassination bid and vowed to visit the embattled region again.

Tamil political parties have strongly condemned the bomb attack. EPDP [Eelam People's Democratic Party] Leader Douglas Devananda described the attack as a fascist act. He said that the LTTE was trying to destroy the goodwill between the security forces and the civilians in the north. Mr. Devananda told the SLBC that the Tiger should therefore be completely eliminated and pledged to support the government's effort to achieve this end.

Sri Lanka: Jaffna Suicide Bombing Toll Rises to 37 Dead

LD0507111696 Melbourne Radio Australia in English 0900 GMT 5 Jul 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The death toll in a suicide bomb attack in Sri Lanka's northern city of Jaffna has risen to 37, with more wounded people still in a critical condition in hospital. [passage omitted]

Sri Lanka: London-Based Group Denies Official's Links With LTTE

BK0407023496 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 3 Jul 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The London-based NGO [Non-Governmental Organization] 'Forum on Sri Lanka' has denied that its executive secretary Bryn Wolfe is an LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] activist as mentioned by media reports in Sri Lanka.

In a press release issued on Tuesday, the Forum on Sri Lanka said: "We favour no party to the conflict and refuse to be used for the propaganda purposes of either side. It is extremely unfortunate that unsubstantiated media reports should have been published which refer to Mr. Wolfe as an LTTE activist and further suggest that he is responsible for raising funds for the LTTE. This is absolutely untrue".

It said Mr. Wolfe stopped in Sri Lanka on his way to address a conference in Canberra to "discuss with partner members of the Forum about the content of his address".

"In his address he is to declare forcefully that there can be no progress towards a political solution to the conflict in Sri Lanka until the LTTE behaves in a more politically responsible manner," it added.

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